





A  
P A R A P H R A S E  
ON THE

ELEVEN FIRST CHAPTERS

OF

St PAUL's Epistle to the ROMANS.

By THOMAS ADAM,

Rector of WINTRINGHAM in *Lincolnshire*.

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The LORD seeth not as man seeth. I SAM. xvi. 7.

Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow,

PSAL. li. 7.

Propter incertitudinem propriæ justitiæ, et periculum  
inanis gloriæ, tutissimum est fiduciam totam in solâ

DEI misericordiâ reponere.

BELLARMIN.

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## P R E F A C E.

**I**T is allowed on all hands that St *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Romans* has fully opened the doctrine of the Gospel, or way of salvation by JESUS CHRIST, and that the great design of it is to state and determine the point of acceptance with God; which he does, first by bringing a charge of sin against all mankind, and then declaring the method of deliverance from the guilt and condemnation of it.

To prepare the way to what we suppose is the account of God's righteousness, and man's justification, delivered in this Epistle, it may be proper to observe, that St *Paul* in his reasoning on the subject all along takes it for granted that our obedience, to justify itself, and entitle us to the divine favour and

approbation, must be perfect; that this, and no other, is the righteousness required in Scripture; that the law of God is inexorably strict in its demands, subjects every offender and every offence to its penalty, and that it necessarily must do so in the nature and reason of it. For if he who offends in one point is not guilty of all, so as to incur a sentence of condemnation for one offence as as well as many; if the law admitted of any deviations, or left men at liberty to believe that they might transgress it with impunity in any one instance, it would destroy itself, and be regarded in none. It is evident that if such an opinion was to prevail, it would lose all its authority in the world; every man would be a lawgiver to himself, and, with supposed allowance from God, make his own will and pleasure the rule of his obedience.

This is an unanswerable reason for the strictness of the law, both in its precepts, and punishment. And when it thus comes to the heart and conscience, and is acknowledged in all its fulness, as unalterably sacred, and denouncing death for every violation

tion of it, the necessity of looking out for a remedy is apparent. What that remedy is, and who shall prescribe it, God or man, is still the great dispute. That it cannot be repentance only, partial amendment, or the most sincere obedience accompanied with defect, we think is evident; because such a persuasion would in effect be an abrogation of the law, which ceases to be a rule, whenever the subject of it assumes a power of dispensing with its commands, or substituting any thing else in the room of its purity and perfection. Let the Reader fancy to himself any other sense of the law, or establish any other idea of it, than as obliging to perfect obedience on pain of death, and he will find himself involved in great difficulties, and have more questions to answer than he is aware of; some of which strike at the truth, and shake the very foundations of Christianity.

If God can overlook the transgressions of his law, greater or less, more or fewer, it may be asked, where was the necessity of an atonement for the breach of it, and especi-

ally that of CHRIST's death? If GOD can accept men to the reward of righteousness, when it is allowed on all hands to be very imperfect, why may they not build their hopes on that supposition, and what occasion can there be for placing their dependence any where else? Why may they not, with the Deist, utterly discard the notion of a Substitute, or Mediator, upon a presumption that GOD will recede from the strictness of his rule, make them judges in their own case, and require nothing at their hands but what they are pleased to do for themselves? Let them be never so sincere, the difficulty still remains. For the plea of sincerity, instead of perfect obedience, is an acknowledgement of defect; and if defect does not destroy our title to the divine favour, no help is wanted, no such salvation is to be looked for as the Gospel proposes to our belief and acceptance; if we can, we must be our own Saviours. In part we must, says the objector to the doctrine of salvation by faith in the righteousness of CHRIST. But we are observing that this is a mistake, and total ignorance of the nature of GOD's law,

which



which can possibly make no account of a partial righteousness, nor allow that to be any obedience at all which is less than it demands. For Proof of which we appeal to the highest authority; and can produce a declaration from the mouth of CHRIST himself, levelled not only against the Pharisees of his own time, but the pharisaical pretenders of all ages, who are bent upon establishing their own righteousness, though they cannot do it without altering the rule which is given them, and shortening it to their own size. *Matt. v. 17—19. Think not, says he, that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

It may be asked, how could any entertain such a disgraceful notion of him, or on what it could possibly be founded? Doubtless on that great peculiarity of his religion, salvation by faith in him; and the answer to the question will be found in the opinion of those at all times, who decry and oppose the doctrine, as destructive of good works. He therefore, in order to obviate the objection, and free himself from the imputation of di-

minishing from the sacredness and perfection of the law, asserts the eternal, indispensable obligation of it in all its strictness, and establishes it in such a sense as no man upon earth can bear. For thus he goes on ; *Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* If it was not fulfilled in, and by him, it never was, nor ever will be fulfilled ; and he has here found hard work for those, who will take that heavy burden upon themselves, and make little or no account of his fulfilling it for them. Do they presume upon indulgence on failure of duty, and undertake the performance of it only upon a supposed allowance for infirmity ? That hope is wrested from them, and their doom is thus declared : *Whoever therefore shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.* Truly, the matter is decided ; the commandments must be received as they are given, in their whole extent both of outward and inward meaning ; no exception must be taken to any part of them, any thing belonging to them, or contained

tained under them ; no dispensation ever was or ever will be granted for the breach of them, much or little ; none must be supposed, or pleaded for, on pain of exclusion from the kingdom of heaven.

If therefore sin is always the same, has always the same guilt and malignity, whether before or after faith, and no obedience can be pleaded for life which is stained with the least spot of sin ; it must be owned that the condition of mankind is still desperate, if the Gospel has provided no relief in the case, adequate to the exigence of it, and a sufficient ground of hope, notwithstanding the truth and severity of that Scripture, that *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, Rom. iii. 23.* But let St Paul be heard, and he will clear up the point to the satisfaction of every distressed conscience ; not by derogating from the perfection of the law ; not by extenuating the sin of mankind ; not by helping them to a plea of sincerity, instead of full performance ; not by shuffling with the word Law, as if by the Law he meant nothing but the Ceremonial part of it ;

it ; nothing by Justification but acceptance with God without the deeds of it ; nothing by faith but a general belief of CHRIST's religion, as revealed to supersede that of *Moses* ; nor lastly, by proposing two kinds of justification, a first and second, one of grace for the remission of sins, the other final, for eternal life, and depending solely on our own obedience.

It is well known that these opinions have been espoused, and warmly contended for by persons of great repute for learning ; and I should not have been forward to deliver my sentiments in opposition to them, if they had not been forced upon me by the plain words, and express design of the Apostle, which was, to state precisely the terms of our acceptance with God, and assert the necessity of a perfect righteousness in order to salvation ; but evidently not our own, and therefore to be received as of grace, by faith.

We are obliged to Dr *Hallifax* for exposing, in the first of his *three Sermons on Justification by Faith*, the absurd, but common opinion, that

that St *Paul* in excluding works from the office of justification, had nothing in view but Ceremonial works ; but we can follow him no farther. His notion of a first and second justification, in agreement with Dr *Taylor*, a very exceptionable Interpreter of Scripture, leaves us just where it finds us ; as the first benefit of forgiveness of sins to be received, and all that is to be received, by faith, would be lost every day of our lives, if we were left afterwards to stand or fall by our own holiness, and had no warrant from Scripture to build our peace, assurance, and comfort, upon any other ground. Is that holiness complete in all points, or is it not ? If it is not, we still need a justifying righteousness from another hand ; and always shall, unless the law has lost its right, or sin its guilt, and the justice of God now under the Gospel is different from what it was when *Adam* was expelled out of Paradise, or the law given to *Moses*.

If it should be affirmed, that the assurance of pardon upon repentance is the great benefit of the covenant of grace ; it is allowed  
that

that without repentance there is no hope of pardon, whether for sins committed before or after a man's entrance into that covenant ; but still this is putting something else in the room of that perfection which the law requires, and there is a very important question yet to be answered: When was this great change made in the condition of our acceptance with God? when and by whom was this relaxation of the law introduced? Not by CHRIST, for he declares positively against it; not by his Apostles, if St Paul may be allowed to speak for them, for he says, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. and that *by the law is the knowledge of sin*, Rom. iii. 20. that is, of our being chargeable with the guilt, and liable to the penalty of it; which could not be if the curse it denounces in case of transgression might be avoided, and a person constituted righteous in the sight of God by imperfect acts of obedience, confession of guilt, and renewed repentance. So indeed the reason of man determines the point, makes a law for itself in opposition to the justice, will, and

and law of GOD, and with intolerable presumption prescribes to him its own method of acceptance.

But if he that judgeth is the LORD, and the law which mankind are under to GOD, is so strict in the nature and reason of it, that no man living can be justified in his sight, either by a plea of obedience, or any expedient of his own devising in the want of it, it is evident that the remedy must be of grace by divine appointment; and submission to it in faith, by which only it can be received; and which is a mixture of penitence, self-renunciation, desire, hope, and sense of obligation, the grand Requisite in the covenant of mercy. It is worthy of remark, that the knowledge of CHRIST, in the heart's assent to the doctrine of salvation by faith, is not only ascribed to the agency of the Spirit, but called *walking after the Spirit*, and eminently THE SPIRIT; it being the principal part of his office, to lay this foundation, and guide the soul into this truth, that *by grace we are saved, through faith, and made the righteousness of GOD in CHRIST*;  
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in opposition to the conceit of justification by any human endeavours, works, attainments, or personal holiness; which is called *walking after the flesh*; as being only the carnal, unenlightened wisdom of man, depending on its own sufficiency, and exalting itself against the truth of God.

That the Spirit is also given for other ends, and works in us as a Spirit of renovation and holiness, is by no means denied; but that his great work is to testify of CHRIST, and ingraft us into him for pardon, life, and salvation, and that the Gospel is in this sense peculiarly the dispensation of the Spirit, appears evidently from many passages of this, as well as St *Paul's* other Epistles.

Let the Reader judge of the force of this observation; if there is truth in it, whether that is not a most fundamental article of belief, the singular benefit, distinction, and great glory of the Christian religion, which gives the denomination of Spirit to the whole of it, as if his work and office in the world was confined to that single point; and whether



ther those are not enemies to the truth, as well as to their own peace, comfort, and holiness, who either reject the gift of a perfect righteousness to establish their own, or plead for a general belief of the Gospel, as the principal notion and office of faith, without specifying what it is in the Gospel which makes it *glad tidings* to a sinful, condemned world, and with very little regard to the grace of faith, which receives and rejoices in CHRIST, as saving us by himself.

Mr *Rotherham*, in his *Essay on Faith*, labours to prove that “the object of faith is that  
“ History of Redemption delivered by the  
“ first inspired preachers of the Gospel, and  
“ now recorded in their writings,” p. 15 ; and consequently that faith, in the one simple notion of it, is nothing but the mind’s assent to that history. But may it not be asked, What it is particularly in that history which distinguishes it from all other religions, and recommends it to the notice and esteem of mankind? Would not every serious person, before he assented to it, think it his duty to ask, wherein consisted the great benefit of  
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his receiving it, be solicitous to understand the meaning and full import of that redemption which it proposed to his belief, and why it was declared to him as the only religion, or way of salvation? Certainly, the history was delivered for the sake of some one or more important truths contained in it, which therefore are in a peculiar manner the object of saving faith; and the concern which every man upon due enquiry finds he has in them, must upon the whole be the very reason of his assenting to and receiving them.

But now ask Mr *Rotheram* the question, What is the object of faith? and he will refer you, with many pathetical complaints of the prevalence of error, and the weakness of enthusiasm, to the history of redemption, as the thing to be believed in order to salvation. Ah! this is short of the matter. We receive the history of redemption with many thanksgivings to God, as the instrument of its conveyance, and necessary to be received in the first place; but what does it contain? What is the redemption therein spoken of? We want to  
know

know precisely by what means we are delivered from condemnation, and restored to the favour of God; what it is that must give ease to the conscience labouring under a sense of guilt, and be a ground of hope to creatures who have a broken law to answer for, and in the account of justice are always sinful. Till these questions are answered we have got nothing but a sealed book in our hands, and are not advanced one step in respect of any advantage to be reaped from the history. And if we should be a little more explicit, and say, as Saint *Paul* did to the Jailor, *Acts* iii. 16. *Believe in the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved*; still it would remain to be inquired what it is in JESUS which we are to fix our faith upon? And if it should be answered, in agreement with all scripture, as we think, and it is presumed Mr *Rothemann* does not deny, his spotless life, and propitiatory death, his merits and righteousness—THERE is the object of faith; the mystery of redemption is explained, and it now appears that as this truth, God *was in* CHRIST, *reconciling the world unto himself*, 2 Cor. v. 19, is the peculiar distinction, and

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great

great blessing of the gospel, so the reception of it, in a renunciation of every other method of salvation, is the very faith by which we believe to the saving of the soul, and the great end for which the Gospel was preached. It is therefore lost labour in Mr *Rotheram* to bring together a great many passages of scripture which speak of a general faith in CHRIST, and then to conclude from them that this is the whole nature of faith, and that neither CHRIST nor the first preachers of the Gospel, required any thing more than such a general, implicit belief of it ; since in the main this would have been inviting men to believe nothing at all, and they would never have gained a single Convert, if they had not descended to particulars in the course of their preaching, and explained to them the fundamental articles of that religion which they proposed to their belief, and about which their faith was principally to be exercised.

This is exemplified, and fully proved, in what followed upon the first christian Sermon that was preached after the descent of the holy Ghost, *Acts* ii. in which St *Peter* exhorted

horted the assembly then present in general terms to believe in CHRIST; and when they desired farther information, and asked “ what they should do,” as they well might, he then declared to them the great doctrine of salvation, and satisfied their inquiry by reducing the whole of his preaching upon that remarkable occasion to this point: *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of JESUS CHRIST for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost.* So he exercised the power of the keys, and opened the kingdom of heaven, both in this and his other Discourses recorded in the *Acts* of the Apostles by a declaration of this great truth, that salvation is only by the name JESUS, or the remission of sins through him.

This was presenting a sensible and very interesting object to his hearers for their faith to lay hold on; and if he and the other Apostles had not declared thus particularly and minutely what it was in the religion of JESUS which they offered to the belief of mankind, what they would gain by receiving it, and what hazard they run by rejecting it;

it ; as I said before, they would have left them as much in the dark as ever, and their preaching must necessarily have been without effect.

Faith then has redemption itself, well understood, and CHRIST the author of redemption, for its object ; and when he commanded his Apostles to *go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature*, he certainly intended that they should unfold the import of the word, and explain those peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, on the belief of which salvation was to depend.

Mr *Rotheram* makes this text as it were the basis of his opinion of the nature of faith ; and supposing that nothing more was meant by it than a commission to preach the Gospel in general ; nor by believing, but the belief of it at large ; would have all the subsequent accounts of the preaching of faith recorded in Scripture, and all other kinds of it, brought to this as their touchstone. And farther, in his chapter *on the Origin of Faith*, he appeals to the miracles of CHRIST as a  
sufficient

sufficient ground of belief in him, and of that general belief only which he contends for.

But let the origin or foundation of faith be what it will, the external evidence of prophecies, miracles, &c. let the Spirit be concerned much or little in operating it, let reason and learning so pompously displayed by Mr *Rotheram*, be constituted judges of the truth and meaning of Scripture, still we want to have the nature of saving faith ascertained by its reference to some peculiar doctrine; and if it is not especially that act of the soul by which it rests on CHRIST for pardon and life, or faith in the promises of God through CHRIST for the blessings of eternity, something or other more than the belief of the history, we have obtained nothing by it but a distant sight of the good land, without entering into the possession of it to enjoy its fruits.

If Mr *Rotheram* does not mean that our faith should terminate in the history, to what end is it to establish that for the great,

if not sole object of it, in which it is confessed it cannot terminate, and if it did, would be utterly insignificant to any saving purpose? Is it to guard against the supposed ill tendency of faith, in its peculiar notion of faith in CHRIST as our righteousness and salvation? Indeed, it has been, and is still alleged that it will be abused to Antinomianism, or licentiousness; and who can say it will not? What is it that may not be abused? This is a reason with some for locking up the Scriptures. But while they are open to us, we cannot help seeing that CHRIST our peace is the sum and substance of them, and that they were written to the end *we might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the Son of GOD; and that believing we might have life through his name*, John xx. 31. If it should be thought that there is any ambiguity in these words of St *John*, and it was still doubtful what the meaning is of believing that JESUS is the CHRIST, and of life through his name by believing; we offer this Epistle of St *Paul* to the *Romans*, as a clear and full comment upon them, and upon every one of those texts which Mr *Rotheram* has cited in defence of his notion. The



The Apostle, we think, has with great plainness of speech, clearness of method, and the most cogent reasoning, proved the necessity of redemption for all mankind; if condemnation in sin can make it necessary; and shewed it to be altogether of mercy, by free grace; and that therefore the faith by which we acknowledge and receive it is the faith required of us, in order to justification, without any claim of merit, or concurrence of works on our part, as having any share in it; which so far as they are pretended to in this sense amount to a denial of the truth, and are absolutely inconsistent with the fullness and freeness of Gospel mercy. Let but the justice of GOD, and the desert of sin, be seen in the light of Scripture, and it will appear at once, what it is the great design of this Epistle to demonstrate, for the instruction of all ages, that as salvation is by righteousness, so righteousness is by faith, it not existing in man; and also that faith, in the precise, saving notion of it, is the belief and acceptance of that righteousness, to the glory of the giver.

The word faith, no doubt, in some instances has a general reference to the belief and religion of the gospel; but as the excellence of that religion can only be judged of, and the religion itself embraced, from a knowledge of its peculiar doctrines, so the excellence and essence of faith must finally be resolved into the mind's adherence to those doctrines; and that more especially, as they have so great an influence on practice, and can have no such influence but by being simply believed and rejoiced in as the mercy of heaven, as freely showered down upon us as the rain comes upon our fields, and the ground of our hope and confidence towards God.

The Scripture doctrine of redemption is the best foundation of the best morality, and leads to such a knowledge of God and ourselves as we could never have had without it; but then the gratitude, love, fidelity, devotion and purity of heart arising from it, necessarily suppose a sense and belief of redeeming mercy going before. Certainly, to be a principle of action, or motive of duty,  
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it must be known, understood, and assented to for its own sake ; and when CHRIST says *If ye love me, keep my commandments*, he directs us to put things in their right order, knowing his love to be previous to, and independent of any acts of ours, and that if it is not first apprehended by faith, no right obedience nor pure love of God will follow.

We have Mr *Rotheram's* leave to observe, that in his chapters on the *tendency* and *operation* of faith he makes honourable mention of the great work of atonement, and is obliged to take refuge in the confined notion of faith as the belief of what CHRIST has done and suffered for us, before he can make it subservient to his purpose, and enforce it as the strongest motive of holiness ; but put the history of redemption, or the book of scripture, for the great object of faith, instead of its saving contents, and the peculiar doctrines therein revealed for faith to rest upon, and it will have no such tendency, nor any operation at all. He is a sensible Writer, and it is not supposed that he can be so absurd as to think we should stop at the history  
without

without searching any farther, or at the bare belief of the Gospel, without understanding what it is, if that were possible: but it is asked again, Why then does he hold up that for the object of faith, and make it the foundation of his *Essay*, which cannot be so in any sense but as it leads to the knowledge of what is? There may be mistakes concerning faith, how it begins, and to what pitch of assurance it must rise; and I am no advocate for that kind of it which is founded on feeling, rather than the word of God. This I believe to be a source of delusion, and a cause of great perplexity to many well-meaning souls, who are taught to account nothing faith but what comes by some kind of private revelation, or inward witness to themselves, and to build all their hope and comfort upon it, instead of an unshaken reliance on the testimony of Scripture. It may be allowed that some persons are so favoured. Such proofs of the doctrine of the Spirit are awakening; and no one can say that they may not be proper, if not necessary from time to time, to give credit and revival to it. The mistake lies in asserting the necessity of  
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his manifesting himself sensibly to *all*, and as if it were hardly possible for *any* to go to heaven without a particular, immediate discovery from him that their names are written in the book of life\*. Let this, or any other error, be guarded against; but not by explaining away the nature of saving faith; not by fixing it on a wrong object, or any thing for life but CHRIST himself, as *the LORD our righteousness*; not by giving up the foundation-truth of the Gospel; which so long as GOD is just, and man is sinful, or St Paul's writings have any credit in the world, will appear to be this—that *being justified by faith, we have peace with GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD; and that as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, Rom. v. 1, 19.

This is the doctrine which the Apostles were ordained to carry into all the world; which distinguisheth the religion of JESUS from all that ever were in the world; and  
which,

\* See LETTERS between Mr John Wesley and Mr Richard Thompson.

which, as it only can save, so if it was more preached, better known, and cordially embraced, would be the great instrument in the Spirit's hands of reforming the world.

May the God and Father of mercies guide us all into the truth, and bless the reading of this Epistle to our instruction in righteousness; that according to the design of it we may be led by the knowledge of sin to repentance; by repentance to faith; by faith to that peace of God which passeth all understanding; by that peace ruling in our hearts, to a new state of pure obedience, unfeigned submission to the law of our Redeemer for his sake, and Christian godliness in the knowledge, love, and adoration of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.

A D V E R-



# ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME things in this PARAPHRASE would perhaps have appeared as properly in the way of *Annotations*; but as a continual reference to notes is apt to divert the attention, I judged it better upon the whole to deliver what I had to say in a continued Paraphrase, though by that means it is sometimes drawn out to an unusual length.

I have left the five last chapters to the Reader's meditation; supposing that the Precepts therein contained are sufficiently clear of themselves, and want nothing but application.

The SERMON is annexed, as coinciding with, and tending to illustrate the doctrine of the Epistle.

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P A R A P H R A S E

On the EPISTLE to the

*R O M A N S.*

C H A P. I.

1 **P**AUL a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle separated to the [office of preaching the] Gospel [or glad tidings, according to the meaning of the Greek word] of [and from] God : [and which it is the great design of this Epistle exactly to state and represent.]

2 Which he had promised afore by his Prophets in the holy Scriptures,

3 Con-

3 Concerning [a great salvation to be wrought by] his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh [in virtue of one of those prophecies, and to redeem the nature which he took upon him.]

4 And [also] declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead: [evidently proving both his Sonship and spotless Holiness.]

5 By whom we have received grace and Apostleship for the obedience of faith [to publish the necessity of submission to the doctrine of faith, and acceptance of salvation by it] among all nations for [the acknowledgement of] his name: [as that alone whereby we must be saved.]

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ [all by profession, some effectually. Reader, weigh the difference.]

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be Saints: [so denominated from their holy calling, beloved of God in Christ Jesus, and living by his rule] Grace to you, and peace from God the Father, and the  
Lord

Lord Jesus Christ. [O Christian, behold thy birthright; and with grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, to thy own soul, as devoutly as the Apostle does.]

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith [comprehending profession, steadiness, and purity] is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers. [O minister! behold thy pattern. If thy spirit is devoted to God in the Gospel of his Son, it will break out, as the Apostle's did, in thanksgiving and prayer for the success of it. Is God thy witness?]

10 Making request [as if this was the burden of all his prayers, for the love he had to them] if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual [either extraordinary, or spiritualising] gift, to the end  
C you

you may be established ; [but lest this should look like assuming too much to himself, he softens the expression, and says,]

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me. [Such is the meeting, and happy intercourse of believers, to edify, comfort, and rejoice in one another.]

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, but was let hitherto, [when it was the will of God that he should go, he was sent to them in chains] that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. [The great wish of his heart, and the sole end for which he lived. The fruit of this Epistle, among all nations, in all ages, is known only to God.]

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise. [All equally blind in the things of God without divine teaching.]

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel [glad tidings to guilty, helpless sinners ; *let this meaning of the word be always carried in mind*] to you that are at

Rome

Rome also. [Where the opposition and danger would be great, and where at last he suffered death.]

St Paul never writes without placing his whole soul full in view ; and it was a soul filled with the knowledge, and smitten with the love of Christ, exulting in the free grace of God, and all on fire for the salvation of mankind by the doctrine which he preached. It would be in vain to look in Heathen writers, or any where but in the Spirit's teaching, for any thing like the simplicity and openness of heart, glow of holy love, purity of intention, and winning address, which appears in this Introduction. For the sake of those to whom he wrote, and to give weight and authority to his instructions, he mentions his call and separation to the dignity of the Apostleship ; but at the same time with advantage to his humility, and without assuming any other distinction than that of eminent concern for their establishment in the Gospel. Truths of the greatest importance he had to communicate ; and to make way for the reception of them, he reduces himself to their level, as if those whom he teaches were equally enlightened with himself, and as capable, by their faith and knowledge, of administering to his comfort as he was to theirs. And how sweetly and powerfully does he insinuate himself into their

affections! *First*, says he, *I thank my God through Jesus Christ our Lord, that your faith is spoken of throughout the world.* To hear of their being in the way to glory and happiness, and celebrated for their steadfastness in it, was the greatest happiness which could befall himself; and he could not proceed to the work he had in hand, of writing to them of the common salvation, without first pouring out his soul in thankfulness to God for it. It seems as if the blessing was all his own; and like one who was in pain to discharge his obligations in person, he declares that he had a longing desire to come to them, and often purposed it, that he might be an eye-witness of their faith and joy in Christ, contribute to the increase of it, and pay the debt of service he owed to them and all mankind.

16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, [in the offer of it] and also to the Greek. [Men of all other nations.]

In this verse, and the next, the Apostle opens the design, and lays the ground-work of the whole Epistle. In which he brings a charge of sin against all flesh—declares the sole method of deliverance from the condemnation of it, by faith  
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in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ—and then builds upon it purity of heart, grateful obedience, and earnest desire of proficiency in all those Christian graces and tempers, which nothing but a lively faith in Christ can produce. And it is worthy of remark, that he says, *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*. Why? What was the matter? What was he going to say, that he thus resolves with himself beforehand not to be ashamed? The gospel is unquestionably a design for holiness; but if that is the great peculiarity of it, and the main drift of his writing and preaching had been to recommend and establish a pure morality, what reason could he have to be afraid of censure? Particularly from the Jew, who contended for such a method of salvation, and whose prejudices he chiefly encounters in this Epistle? The shame and offence then was in preaching Christ crucified, and the righteousness of his life and death for the salvation of all; a doctrine which the world's saints especially could never bear, and too many at all times are in effect ashamed of the Apostle for his zealous, bold defence of it. He is very plain, but withal pretty much out of the common way of thinking, in what follows.

17 For therein [in and by the Gospel] is the righteousness of God [of God's working,

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appointing

appointing, and giving, that which he will account and accept as such, that only which is so, and by which we must stand or fall for ever] revealed [to be] from faith to faith: [faith only, faith growing and increasing, faith first and always, faith at the beginning, faith at the end of our progress] as it is written, The just shall live [be freed from condemnation, made alive unto God, and live eternally] by faith. [Or as others choose to place the words, The just by faith shall live. And if this is not our remedy, if life does not come to us only by righteousness, and righteousness by faith, the condition of mankind must be acknowledged to be desperate.]

18 For the wrath of God is [now by the preaching of the gospel] revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, [therefore there are two things to be done; see the damnableness of all sin, and the reality and greatness of thy own; there is no other way of coming to faith. I say, wrath revealed from heaven, and therefore firmly to be believed in the first place, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men] who hold the truth in unrighteousness,



neis. [Stifle the truth they might have known, and would have known and improved, if it had not stood in the way of their lusts. Ignorance so wilful will be no extenuation of their guilt.]

19 Because that which may be known of God [enough to be a ground of their belief, adoration, and subjection] is manifest in them, [to their reason and understandings, if they would have made use of them. But it is said, *in* them; perhaps the meaning is particularly, in the powers of their souls, and the structure of their bodies] for God hath shewed it unto them. [By a simple, universal method of instruction, obvious to the meanest capacities.]

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world [either all along from the time of the creation, or from the wisdom displayed in it] are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. [Men may dispute or deny what they are unwilling to understand, and thrust the knowledge of God from them; but he, who cannot be deceived,

ceived, sees the root of their perverseness, and knows where to lay the charge against them.]

21 Because that when they knew God, [as all did at the beginning, and of whose Being they always had full demonstration in his works] they glorified him not as God, [by making him the sole object of their worship, and putting their whole trust in him] neither were thankful [to him, as ordaining their lot, and dispensing all their blessings; for then they would not have sought out other inventions, nor looked for help anywhere else] but became vain in their imaginations, [or reasonings] and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools: [they had their reasons, as they thought, for acting as they did, dethroning God, and withdrawing their homage from him. Behold the wisdom of man, of Philosophy, of the wisest of men before the coming of Christ!]

23 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. [It is  
amazing

amazing to consider how universally the world was overrun with the most stupid idolatry, and how prone it is to it at all times.]

24 Wherefore God also [as a punishment of their wickedness, and by the force of all Judgments] gave them up to uncleanness, [left them to the workings of their own minds, and the strength of natural corruption; the consequence of which, as here represented, was in all respects shameful and abominable] through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, [or Idol] and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men, working that which is unseemly, and receiving  
ing

ing in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient :

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful :

32 Who knowing [who must not plead ignorance, because in the right use of their reason they might have known, and make it appear in some measure, by the penalties of their own laws against such practices, that they do know] the just judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. [Flattering

tering both themselves and others with the hope of impunity from God.]

1<sup>st</sup>, It may be observed from this chapter, what monstrous excesses of debauchery, and vice of all kinds, men will run into, when they are destitute of the knowledge, and unrestrained by the fear of God.

2<sup>dly</sup>, The general cessation of idolatry must be dated from the preaching of the Gospel. It is a well-known fact that mankind did not by any reason, acuteness, or efforts of their own, disengage themselves from so detestable an error; and the enemies of Revelation must acknowledge, that if they are more enlightened in this respect than the wisest of preceding ages, whom they affect to admire for their Virtue, Philosophy, and what not, they are indebted for it to that Religion which they despise and reject.

3<sup>dly</sup>, But nevertheless the nature of man under every denomination, one religion as well as another, Pagan, Jewish, or Christian, is still the same; and the Apostle's charge against the Gentile world, however shocking, is more or less the state and character of mankind at all times, till they are brought to an unfeigned subjection to the faith of Christ, and renewed by a divine power. The grossest enormities, the most flagi-  
tious

tious villanies appear in some, the seeds of them are in all; and though their growth is checked, and the eruption of them hindered, by providential restraints, want of occasion, different circumstances in life, or other causes, yet there never was a man upon earth who had not reason to lament his natural fearlessness of sin, strength of corruption, and secret repugnance to the will of God.

*4thly*, Therefore this chapter is a call to self-examination; the result of which will be conviction of sin, and of the necessity of deliverance from a state of condemnation, either solely in virtue of our own endeavours, repentance and reformation, or by a method of God's revealing. Which of the two will be available to the salvation of sinners, and conduces most to the glory of God, in the freedom of his grace, and the vindication and establishment of his law, as well as the ease and satisfaction of our own minds, and our return to him in repentance, and the truth of a pure obedience, is the business of this Epistle to determine.

The Apostle has now stated the case of the Gentiles. But as he knew that the Jew more especially would be ready to plead an exemption from the sins here laid to their charge, he next brings *him* to the bar of conscience, and examines  
his

his pretensions to an unblameable conformity to the law. The Jews had a right knowledge of God, with a perfect rule of duty in their hands, and supposing, by a natural and very common mistake, that they were in the main what they knew they should be, would take no share to themselves of the accusation here brought against the rest of mankind. Christian Reader, let this be a caution to thee to keep thy eyes turned inward, and follow the Apostle with deep attention.

## C H A P. II.

I. **T**HEREFORE [to give what has been said its full extent, and apply it more closely and particularly] thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art [meaning more especially the Jew] that judgest [others, to the clearing of thyself] for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost the same things. [If not exactly the same outwardly, and in all respects, yet enough to make thee an offender as well as those whom thou judgest, guilty of the same rebellion against God, and equally liable to a sentence of condemnation.]

2 But

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, [the exact truth of every man's state, not according to mens opinion of themselves, or outward appearance] against them that do such things. [All, or any of them, to condemn all alike.]

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, who judgest them that do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? [There is a way for all to escape, as the Apostle will shew, but not by pleading innocence, when thou wilt infallibly be found guilty.]

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing [or considering] that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? [as giving thee time and opportunity to come to the knowledge of thyself, and intended to lead thee to an humble confession of thy sin, that thou mayest find mercy.]

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; [which must necessarily take place against thee to thy everlasting



everlasting ruin, if thou either continuest blind to thy condition, or standest out against his method of deliverance from it.]

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds :

7 To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing [without turning aside to the right hand, or to the left] seek for glory, and honour, and immortality ; eternal life :

8 But unto them that are contentious, [in disputing against] and do not obey the truth [fully and universally] but obey unrighteousness, [much or little] indignation and wrath ;

9 Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first [as sinning against a plain and positive law] and also of the Gentile, [as sinning against the light of natural conscience.]

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

11 For there is no respect of persons with God, [to absolve, or condemn, Jew or Gentile, merely for being such, and without regard to their real, moral state.]

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The Apostle is establishing a truth which mankind at all times are too apt to disbelieve, or at the best apprehend but faintly and with little effect, *viz.* that sin, wherever it is found, is the object of God's displeasure, and exposes every soul of man to a sentence of condemnation. And he does it to the end that men may consider what they have to do. If they can justify themselves to a righteous, heart-searching God, all is well; if not, there is a necessity for their looking out for a remedy. He is therefore preparing the way for the remedy which he had to propose; and the reader will be prepared for it, and keep pace with him, just in proportion as he keeps sight of these two chapters, and is impressed with a sense of sin, and of judgment for sin.

12 For as many as have sinned without law, [without a written law, as the Jews had] shall also perish without law: [without being judged by that law] and as many as have sinned in [and under] the law [of Moses] shall be judged by the law. [The reason and equity of which he declares afterwards, *ver.* 14, 15.]

13 For not the hearers of the law [receiving it, professing to be governed by it, and in some respects conforming to it] are just before

before God, [whatever they may be in the sight of men] but the doers of the law [in its full extent, and strict meaning] shall be justified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the [written] law, do by nature [are directed by the light of natural reason and conscience to do] the things contained in the law, [to fear God, to be true and just in their dealings, to keep their bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity, &c.] these having not the law, are a law unto themselves.

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another ;

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men [the inmost thoughts, desires, and intentions, real workings, and secret bent of every man's heart and nature] by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. [Or preaching, and particularly the doctrine now insisted on by me.]

If the Gentiles should have alleged ignorance of duty, because it was not taught them by a

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written

written law, that plea is here obviated. “ Verrily, says the Apostle, they had a law, which they might have known and attended to; and a day is coming when their consciences will not suffer them to deny the truth.” The meaning therefore is not that the Heathens actually knew and practised their duty in any such sense as to escape condemnation, or be intitled to a reward; but that they might have known more, and acted better than they did. The Apostle’s design was not to furnish them with an excuse which in effect would have been keeping them from the faith of Christ, but to prove their guilt; which he does by affirming, that they had a law which they might have conformed to, and did not. Their obedience to it would have saved them, and their disobedience subjected them to punishment, as well as the Jews; against whom more particularly he turns the argument in what follows. For in their case the matter was still more evident, and there could be no room for dispute. They had the will of God clearly revealed to them in a written law; and they could not but know that the rule of their duty would also be the rule and measure of their condemnation.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, [one of God’s peculiar people] and retest in the law,

law, [with full consent and approbation] and makest thy boast of God ; [as thy God]

18 And knowest his will, and approveest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law,

19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the [perfect] form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.

21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? [by causing the religion of his appointing to be evil spoken of.]

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, through you, as it is

written. [By the scandalous wickedness of many of those who had the knowledge of his will, and gloried in their relation to him as his true worshippers. Christian, apply.]

But does the Apostle therefore discharge all the rest from any part of this accusation, because they were not openly and notoriously guilty of the transgression of their law? The heart, was that right? Was the law written, and kept there? Could they plead the utmost exactness of performance, from a root of inward purity; and were they sure that he *who will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*, saw no stealing, adultery, or sacrilege in them? In order to open their eyes, and lead them into the depth of their hearts, Christ led them into the depth of their law; *Mat. v.* and we may well suppose that *St Paul* has his eye here upon the strictness and purity of it; and does not intend to frustrate his design in this Epistle, which was to bring them all, and all others, to the acceptance of the grace of God in Christ, by a sense of their guilt, and want of remission.

25 For circumcision verily profiteth, [and hath its intended effect, not because thou art circumcised, and called a Jew, but] if thou keepest the law; [in its whole extent of outward and inward meaning] but if thou be a  
breaker

breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

So in like manner if it could be supposed that the virtue of the Heathens was exact, and their practice unblameable, the want of circumcision will not be imputed to them.

26 Therefore [by parity of reason] if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

27 And shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, [not granting that it does; neither is this said upon any such supposition, but to beat down the high esteem which the Jews had of themselves on account of circumcision] judge thee, who by the letter [notwithstanding the advantage thou hast of a written law] and circumcision [binding thee to fulfil it] dost transgress the law?

28 For he is not a Jew, [a true, covenanted servant, and child of God] who is one [only] outwardly; neither is that circumcision, [in God's account, or a seal and assurance of his favour merely for its own sake] which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, [according to the spiritual meaning and signification of the precept] and not in the letter, [or outward, literal observation of it only] whose praise is not of men, but of God. [Who seeth not as man seeth ; and will assuredly find matter of condemnation in all ; whatever they think of themselves, or however they may appear to the world.]

It seems to me that some expressions in this chapter have been greatly misrepresented. *For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves ; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts,* ver. 14, 15. Therefore if the uncircumcision [or Gentile] keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision ? And shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law ? *ver.* 26, 27. “ Observe, say some, the clearness of natural light, and what a sufficiency of power is here ascribed to man for all the purposes of virtue, self-government, and the divine approbation.” But that this is carrying the matter a great deal too



too far, will appear by considering the design of the chapter; which is to put the Jews upon a level with the Gentiles in point of acceptance with God, and to shew that as neither had acted up to the light they had, they were both involved in the same condemnation. That the Gentiles might have attained to such a knowledge of God and their duty, as would have preserved them from the abominable errors of belief and practice they fell into, the Apostle does affirm; and it must be allowed that the force of natural conscience, and a power of discerning between good and evil, still remains, and is perhaps less impaired by the Fall than any other faculty of the soul; because otherwise all attempts to convince men of sin, and call them to repentance, would be in vain. But what the strength and sufficiency of human reason is, must be decided by experience and testimony of scripture; for whatever it is, the Apostle leaves it just as he found it; and could have no intention to magnify it so as to depreciate the light of Revelation, or to make the remedy he had to offer less desirable, by first confirming mankind in an opinion that they did not want it, and had nothing to do for their recovery but to exert the powers which God had given them. His design lies another way; and the point he has in view is to diminish the confidence which the Jews had in themselves on account of circum-

cision, and other external privileges, as if they were solely the favourites of heaven, and liable to no forfeiture of their covenant-state. His sole aim, I say, was to expose the vanity of this pretence, by shewing that the Gentiles, on supposition of their innocence and rectitude of behaviour, would have had as good a title to the favour of God as themselves; but that neither of them could have any such claim or hope in the want of it. Which being evidently and notoriously the case of both, they were equally concluded under sin, and could only be relieved by an act of mercy in God, discharging them from the guilt and punishment of it. What? would the Jews say, is this the amount of all our privileges, and in case of sin do we stand equally condemned with the rest of the world? Yes verily, says the Apostle; the nature of sin is to condemn, and Justice must have its course on all alike. Behold therefore, whoever thou art, Gentile, Jew, or Christian, on what a dreadful point thou standest; trembling on the brink of destruction, and sure to perish if the hand of Omnipotence is not stretched out to save thee. Learn from what has been said in these two chapters to be humble. Be silent before God when he enters into judgment with thee; confess thy guilt and wretched impotence, and the mercy of heaven will next be presented to thy view. In the mean time, the Apostle has a few words

words more to say concerning the Jew, obstinate and hard to be convinced ; perhaps, concerning Thee.

## C H A P. III.

1 **W**HAT advantage then hath the Jew, [above the rest of mankind] and what profit is there of circumcision? [If it confers no title of itself to the favour of God?]

2 Much every way : chiefly because that unto them, were committed the oracles of God. [In which they had not only clear light, and a more perfect rule to walk by, but also the promise and prefiguration of deliverance from the guilt of sin by means of a Saviour.]

3 For what if some [meaning the generality of the Jews] did not believe [the oracles of truth?] shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? [frustrate, or set aside God's doctrine, or method of salvation by faith, declared to all, both Jew and Gentile, as absolutely necessary?]

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man [rejecting his truth] a liar; [a sinner, wanting this relief, as every man will

will certainly be found to be] as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, [charging all with sin] and clear when thou art judged. [In spite of any man's self-justifying pretensions.]

5 [But here the Jew says, and others will be ready to say] But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, [shew the necessity of a righteousness not our own, but one of God's giving and appointing, to his glory] what shall we say [to this?] Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance [upon the impenitent and unbelieving? Since it should seem that according to this way of justification, of all, because they are sinners, none can be objects of his vengeance.] I speak as a man: [as men blind, and stubborn in evil, are too apt to do.]

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? [finally discriminating one part of mankind from the other, as he hath declared he will.]

7 For if the truth of God [the objector goes on, his eternal, infallible purpose of justifying sinners by grace, through faith] hath more abounded through my lie, [my sin]

sin] unto his glory ; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? [seeing that sinners, as such, are received to favour, and God is thereby glorified?]

8 And not rather [the objector still urges] as [indeed, saith the Apostle] we be slanderously reported, and as some [actually] affirm that we say, [viz.] Let us do evil that good may come? [greater mercy to mankind sinners, more glory to God] whose damnation is just. [The damnation of all who thus abuse the doctrine of Grace, and draw this impious conclusion from it, to countenance and harden themselves in sin.]

9 What then? are we [Jews] better than they [the Gentiles? because we have the oracles of God committed to us, and other advantages which they have not] no, in no wise: [not at all in the great point of justification with God, now under consideration] for we have before [chapters first and second] proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. [And therefore under condemnation; for being under sin, and being condemned, are equivalent.]

10 As it is written, there is none righteous, [in the full sense of the word] no not one:

11 There

11 There is none that understandeth,  
there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they  
are together become unprofitable, there is  
none that doeth good, [so as to be good, in  
the sight of God, and in the estimation of  
the law] no not one. [The repetition is  
remarkable.]

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre;  
with their tongues they have used deceit;  
the poison of asps is under their lips:

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and  
bitterness.

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood.

16 Destruction and misery are in their  
ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not  
known.

18 There is no fear of God before their  
eyes.

Here is the charge, including breach of duty to  
God and man. You reply vehemently, Not  
guilty; or Not so guilty, not in every particular  
here mentioned. Be it so; but if you are guilty  
in any one, your plea of obedience, or freedom  
from sin, is defective, and you must of all neces-  
sity

city look out for some other kind of justification. How much more, if upon prayer to God to search you, and take the veil from your heart, you should find yourself concerned in every part of the accusation, black as it is, and however mortifying the discovery. St *Paul*, you see, is very positive in the matter, and with great force of asseveration levels his charge against every individual of the human race; enumerating such particulars of guilt for their consideration and conviction, as if once admitted must make them odious and abominable in their own eyes, and oblige them to accept of the remedy he had to propose. Surely, he intended they should be admitted; and must not be supposed to argue so unskilfully as to build his very important conclusion upon uncertain grounds, or such as might justly be denied by many of whom they are affirmed. It is true, they are denied, and generally speaking as little attention is paid, and as little credit given to the Apostle, as if he had been debating the point with another species of creatures. But *let God be true, and every man a liar*. The lowest room, as here pointed out, is indeed very low; but be persuaded to sit down in it, without any fear of mistaking thy place. Turn not thy eyes from the faithful mirror now held up to thee. Let the word of God be as fire searching thy inward parts; for this is the  
very

very saying in which he will be justified against all flesh; and no mask can hide thee from his eye, no acts of humanity, no goodness of natural temper, civility of manners, or outside polish, will be a refuge from the purity and perfection of his law. Take the worst article of the charge, and see how thou wilt answer it. Art thou really free from malice, hatred, anger? has pure love taken possession of thy soul? For in the scripture account there is no medium between that and killing, *Mat. v. 22.* 1 *John iii. 15.* Art thou not thinking with secret pleasure of some one's death, by which thou wilt be a gainer, or have more of thy own will? The decent tear may be dropt, and the mourning put on; but the point in question with respect to this, and all the other particulars here mentioned, is the secret, real bent of the heart. If that is right, the man is innocent; if it is not, the charge stands good even against the better part of mankind; though it is what few will own, and none but an inspired Apostle durst have presented to observation.

It may farther be remarked here once for all, that the great difference between the religion of the Gospel, and all others, or any thing that the mind of man could have thought of, is the account it makes of the state of mankind with respect to sin, the nature and universality of it, the method of justification which it proposes to  
our



our belief, and the effect of that justification in the moral change it produces. Sin it defines to be *the transgression of the law*; with this declaration annexed, that wherever it is found, much or little, it not only bars all title to reward, but gives the offender up to condemnation. Upon this state of the case, the scripture appeals to every man's heart and conscience, and puts it to his choice whether he will plead guilty, or stand upon his own justification. If he is disposed to deny, or extenuate his guilt, there is an end of all hope from the Gospel, it can proceed no farther with him; if he will give way to conviction, confess the desert of sin, humble himself before God for his own, and relinquish every claim to mercy but mercy, it is richly provided, freely offered, and stands ready for his acceptance. When it is refused, nature is left to itself, and what fruit it will produce from its own stock, the Apostle has told us; when it is received in penitence, as nothing less than life from the dead, the effect of it, by the working of the same Spirit which opened it to the heart, will be gratitude, love, and willing obedience. In this sense I understand the Epistle now before us, and am compelled upon the fullest conviction of its design so to understand it. I did not think myself at liberty to sit down and imagine what answer the Apostle should have returned to the important inquiries

inquiries concerning the nature of sin, and the means of deliverance from the curse and power of it; but judged it to be my duty to follow the guidance of his light, under a firm persuasion that it came from heaven, and to receive information from him in points of which I was ignorant, and about which I could never have satisfied myself. If I have mistaken, or misrepresented him, the good Lord pardon me, to whom I dare make no protestations of perfect sincerity and freedom from prejudice. One thing I gained by a simple assent to revealed truth, that I was no longer tempted to palliate my sin, nor afraid to think myself the chief of sinners; knowing from the same oracles of truth what fulness of redemption there is in Christ, and that the greatness of the mercy would be understood, and the belief of it operate to the knowledge and love of God, and sympathy for all mankind, just in proportion as I was sensible of my want of it, and of the ruinous state from which it delivers us. It is evident that such a sense of the great evil and prevalence of sin was necessary for the reception of the Gospel at its first preaching. And if it should be alleged, that there is a happy alteration in the condition and circumstances of mankind in Christian countries; and that with a better knowledge of God, a more perfect rule of duty, and the clear revelation of a future state  
of

of rewards and punishments, it may well be supposed that the generality are not now chargeable with such gross enormities as the heathens were : I would answer, that I am persuaded there are great numbers at all times who are aiming at Gospel-holiness, under the influence of christian education, and gospel-motives. But nevertheless the nature of man is still the same, the imperfection of the best is very great, and all have still the same want of redeeming mercy ; and if there are any who think they have less need of Christ, his atonement and righteousness, on account of any improvement, or attainments of their own, they greatly overrate those attainments, desert the fundamental principles of their religion, and are so far unbelievers. Let the mystic be as spiritual as he can, but with a consciousness of infinite defect and humble dependence on the Saviour's merits ; let good works have their due honour and estimation, form the character, and appear eminently in the life of every disciple of Christ, but not to be the foundation of his hope, as if they would bear the trial in a day of judgment\*.

19 Now we know that whatsoever things  
the law saith, [the *moral* law evidently, of  
E which

\* See an excellent Sermon of Bishop *Andrew* on *Jer.* xxiii. 6.

which only the forementioned particulars are breaches] it faith to them who are under the law: [and therefore especially to the Jew, though he would fain shift off all the blame to others; but to thee also, O christian, who hast the law before thee] that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. [Though possibly not before men. *Before God*, is a searching word; think of it, and look at the heart where He does.]

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified [or accounted righteous] in his sight: [because they are short of the Rule] for by the law is the knowledge of sin. [And therefore to be convinced of sin, we have nothing else to do but to compare our hearts and lives with it.]

21 But now the righteousness of God [that only which is so, and which only he can accept for justification unto life] without the law [without respect to a man's being, or not being under the law] is manifested [in and through Jesus Christ] being witnessed by the law [promising, and prefiguring, and by the rigour of its precepts forcing those  
who

who were under it to accept the grace and righteousness of a Redeemer] and [also] by the prophets; [opening it more fully, and more clearly foretelling the person by whom it was to be conveyed.]

22 Even the righteousness of God [mark the words, and the repetition—even the righteousness of God—not what we perform, but what he gives to us, and] which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, [both Jews and Gentiles] and upon all them that believe [in him working it for us] for there is no difference: [none having a claim of right to it.]

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [as sinners, are cut off from all hope of seeing God in his glory.]

24 Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, [or atonement, to be conveyed to mankind in the only way it can be conveyed] through faith in his blood, [as a sacrifice for sin, and the price of our redemption] to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, thro' the forbearance of

God; [I think the words of the original should be otherwise understood, *viz.* to declare his righteousness or justice, because of, not *apbesin*, the word for *remission*, see *Bengelius*; but, *parefin*, the *passing by* of former sins, that is, his winking at, and overlooking for so many ages the sins of mankind, without a general declaration from heaven of his displeasure against them, or calling them to repentance; which forbearance, as it might be thought an imputation on his justice, the apostle says again,]

26 To declare at this time his righteousness: [now vindicated, and fully manifested to the world, by his exacting the punishment of sin in the death of Christ] that [so] he might be just, [to himself, and his law] and the justifier [both in a way of grace and equity] of him which believeth in Jesus. [As having made full satisfaction to the justice and holiness of God, and paid the penalty of our sins with his blood.]

27 Where is boasting then? it is excluded. [As it must be when we stand in judgment before God, who cannot endure it] by what law? of works? [depend on that law for justification,

justification, and you will swell with self-conceit, and be a very great boaster with very little of performance] nay; but by the law of faith. [Which condemns before it absolves, and in the nature of it utterly annihilates all boasting.]

28 Therefore we conclude that a man [every man, let him be what he will in his own, or the world's account] is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. [If you have them not, be persuaded by all means to let that plea alone. St *Paul* has struck you dead with a charge of sin, but it was to open a way to your relief; and he has now brought out a most blessed conclusion for you, if you will but receive it in simplicity, under a due sense of your unworthiness, and with a full renunciation of all other claims. As you love your peace, and your soul, let not any man upon earth teach you to explain it away, nor remove you one hair's breadth from this foundation.]

29 Is he the God of the Jews only? [as he must be, if they were saved by their law, which the Gentiles had not] is he not also of the Gentiles? yes, of the Gentiles also:

[their God, in the blessed, full import of the word.]

30 Seeing it is one God, [the Father of all] who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. [One and all, in the only way they can be justified, by mercy, and a free gift; to be received humbly and thankfully by faith, or a will and purpose to rest upon it for salvation, the only way in which it can take effect.]

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? [as of no use, or validity, seeing we exclude it from the office of justification] God forbid: yea, we establish the law. [As that by which we come to the knowledge of sin, as necessary to be fulfilled in every jot and tittle of it, as so fulfilled by Christ, as the rule we are always to conform to under him, and shall with great advantage, by being discharged from it as a covenant.]

Reader, what dost thou choose? law, or gospel? wilt thou put thyself upon thy trial for obedience, and challenge God with it, or be saved as a condemned man? Wilt thou be interested in the Apostle's conclusion, *ver.* 28, by admitting his premises, or lose the benefit of it  
by



by denying the charge of sin he brings against thee? Let me speak for myself. When I determined as much as possible to lay aside all preconceived opinions, whether of my own or taken up from others, in order to know the mind of God from God himself, as declared by his servant *Paul*; it was pleasing, transporting news to me, to hear him saying, with the utmost plainness of words, *We conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law*, manifestly excluding them from all share in our justification. The latter, I had not; and if I might attain to life, and stand clear with God by faith, or my acceptance of the grace offered me, I perceived that it exactly suited my case as an undone sinner, was the very thing I wanted, and shall want to the last moment of my breath. The Lord grant I may receive it in penitence, hold it fast, and work with it according to his will. I know the world at all times rises up in arms against St *Paul*'s conclusion, and that the authority of St *James* in particular is called in to stab it to the heart; though he only guards against the abuse of it, pleads for a living instead of a dead faith, and shews how faith works, and must work to justify itself. Works prove it, as light does fire, but can never do its office, which is to receive salvation by a righteousness of God's appointing, as a gift, to rest on what

Christ has done and merited for us, as the only sufficient ground of our acceptance, and always to keep it separate in our minds from any works or worthiness of our own. Dear Christian, know the truth, and let the Apostle's conclusion lie as near thy heart as it did to his. Live more upon it, be truly thankful for the mercy of it, and you will be the better for it in all respects; more humble, more devoted to God, more lively and pure in your obedience from a root of love, more chearful, more happy. If Christ is your all, you will not lose him by suffering sin to reign in you; and as you can attain to faith in him only in a way of self-condemnation, you will certainly have one vice less by hypocrisy. You need not be in pain for the interests of Morality by the prevalence of this doctrine. St *Paul* will tell you over and over again what advantage a sincere faith gives you for holiness, and be very urgent with you to abound in all the blessed fruits and effects of it. In the mean time, let us follow him closely, and observe in what manner he establishes his great point; which is, that *a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law*; any works, obedience, holiness of our own, as concurring, or co-operating to our justification in whole or in part, with the finished work of Christ. No; say a multitude of objectors, men of renown, learned, and respectable for their  
characters

characters in the Christian world, the terms must be rightly understood; works, faith, law, justification, must all be distinguished, and *St Paul's* doctrine admitted with great caution, and so interpreted as not to clash with other parts of scripture. It is alleged, that by works we are not to understand the sincere, faithful obedience of believers, but either "works done before faith," however specious, or the ceremonial works of the Jewish law, and especially the latter: that faith is not trust in Christ, or the promises of God for acceptance through him, but belief of the Gospel, in opposition to all other Religions, accompanied with fidelity: and that by justification, the Apostle does not mean full and final justification, but the remission of past sins in baptism, with the benefit of subsequent renewals by repentance, whenever it is wanted. It is matter of some difficulty to separate the good from the bad, truth from error, in these several accounts; though it will be attempted in the course of this Paraphrase. At present I would confront them all with this one proposition, which seems to me to be the essence, glad tidings, great blessing, and peculiar glory of the Gospel, full relief to the conscience, and a most powerful call to the heart for its return to God in obedience; and I hope it will not be worse received for being given in the words of our Church.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE XI. *Of the Justification of Man.*

“ We are accounted righteous before God,  
 “ only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour  
 “ Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own  
 “ works or deservings. Wherefore, that we  
 “ are justified by faith only, is a most wholesom  
 “ doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more  
 “ largely is expressed in the Homily of Justifi-  
 “ cation.”

I take it for granted that by justification, the compilers of this article meant complete salvation; for else there would be very little comfort in the doctrine, as the benefit of justification, otherwise understood, would be lost daily, and the soul left destitute of its hope, if daily sins can forfeit it. It is also evident, that by *works*, they meant works of righteousness in obedience to the law of God; and when they ascribed justification to faith alone, intended to exclude them wholly from the office or power of justifying. And it is likewise evident that, by *deeds of the law*, the Apostle intended no other: not works done before faith, which the objectors allow and contend for, supposing that they have the nature of sin; for then his conclusion would be a strange one indeed, *viz. We are justified by faith, without the deeds of the law*; that is to say, without sinful actions:

actions : not ceremonial works ; because then the instance of *Abraham*, who lived before the appointment of the Jewish ceremonies, and was declared to be a justified person before the law of circumcision was given to himself, would not have been pertinent. Let us hear how the Apostle goes on.

## C H A P. IV.

1 **W**HAT shall we say then, that Abraham our Father, [allowed to be one of the brightest examples of obedience] as pertaining to the flesh, [considered in himself, and as to any abilities, performances, or righteousness of his own] hath found? [or attained to justification? a right to the favour of God, and eternal life? no such thing;]

2 For if Abraham were justified [perfectly pure and clean] by [his own] works, [so the Apostle explains the word *just* in the foregoing verse] he hath whereof to glory, [he wanted no grace, no remission, he hath ground of glorying in himself] but not before God. [Whose eyes are as a flame of fire searching the heart, and in whose sight no man living shall be justified.]

3 For

3 For what faith the Scripture? [which only can set us right in the point, and from which there is no appeal to any reasonings or imaginations of men] Abraham believed God, [in his word and promise. Therefore listen not to those, who will allow nothing to be faith but the assurance of it, by a particular witness, or in-speaking. I do not ridicule, or deny this, as if none were so favoured; but surely requiring something more to rest our faith upon than God's word, is not treating it very respectfully, but in effect disbelieving it till it has received farther confirmation] and it was counted to him for righteousness. [Placed to his account, made over to him, instead of that righteousness which he should have had to be just in the sight of God, and had not.]

4 Now to him that worketh, [perfectly, all that is required of him] is the reward not reckoned of grace, [as according to all scripture it must be] but of debt. [And God will not deny payment, if we can make good our claim to it.]

5 But [this is running a desperate hazard, our comfort lies another way, our hope  
turns

turns altogether upon another hinge, for] to him that worketh not, [though not perfectly, and so as to approve his work to God] but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, [as Abraham was, and every man upon earth is] his faith is counted for righteousness. [And if he will not think it to be so accounted, and accept a righteousness from God, [mark what faith is] there is no remedy for him in all nature ; he may be a hypocrite, speak big words of his holiness and perfection, impose upon others, and perhaps himself too, but God cannot be so deceived.]

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man [that blessedness which is so generally despised, and pleaded against by man] unto whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works.

Not perfect, and therefore in God's account the same as none. If he meant only works done before faith, it is strange that neither he, nor the Apostle, should be more explicit, nor put in a single word to prevent mistake in a matter of such moment. Neither did he mean ceremonial works, as if they only were of no account  
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in the matter of justification ; because in David's time they were as necessary as moral works, and the neglect of them would certainly have been imputed to a Jew for sin. The Apostle therefore does not single them out, as what he particularly rejected. The truth is, they were not to be rejected. They were commanded ; and so far as *any* deeds of the law could be a ground of justification, intitled to their full share in the merit of it. It remains, that the righteousness here said to be imputed, is that which all want, a righteousness of God's giving, and not of man's working in any part of his life. It would daunt the heart of the greatest saint that ever lived to think he had nothing to stand or fall by for ever but flesh, that is, himself ; and I am persuaded that the more we are in earnest with our duty, the more sensible we shall be how far we come short of that perfection of working, which is the point in question, and which alone can intitle us to a reward.

7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are [all] forgiven, and [all] whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute [any] sin.

You



You may bring the matter to a short issue with yourself: either you have sin, or you have not; and if you have, you must either deny the guilt of it, and stand up in defiance of God's justice, or consent to be blessed in *David's* way, by having it forgiven, covered, not imputed. Be persuaded by these testimonies of scripture, as understood by *St Paul*, that it is the only refuge of mankind, not once, or twice, but always, and of every man in his very best estate. What? not one of our numerous sins unforgiven? all the guilt of all of them covered? I am sure this is blessedness, let who will despise it. It must now be observed, that *St Paul* had two great truths to establish, salvation by faith, without the deeds of the law, of whatever kind, whether ceremonial or moral; and also the universality of salvation by the gospel, both which the Jews denied. And one is a consequence of the other; because if salvation is by a covenant, or grant of mercy, none can plead an exclusive right to it. Accordingly, the Apostle, having proved the former, now proceeds to shew that the benefit of it was intended for all. And the reader will observe that these two points are so interwoven throughout the Epistle as mutually to illustrate and support each other. Salvation is by grace, through faith; then who will say that any are excluded? Are none excluded? Then  
it

it must be by grace ; for however the Jews might presume upon their title to it, as the peculiar people of God, the other nations of the earth could have no such claim. The Jews, as I said, denied both ; and therefore the Apostle has always his eye upon both ; for the conviction and comfort both of Jew and Gentile.

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also ? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How was it then reckoned ? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision ? not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised : that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised ; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also :

12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

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From all which it evidently appears, that any peculiar, sole claim of the Jews to the blessedness of *Abraham* on account of circumcision, and because they only had the seal of the covenant, is quite out of the question; for that *Abraham* himself was justified *before* he was circumcised, and therefore the want of circumcision can be no bar in others to the imputation of the same righteousness, by the same faith to which it was imputed in him, and to which only it can be imputed in any.

13 For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, [the common father of all believers, in whom the promise was vested, to be conveyed to them as their inheritance] was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, [to his natural descendants in virtue of their being under the law, which he himself had not] but through the righteousness of faith. [Closing with the promise, and accounting that, and that only, to be righteousness, which God appoints, and offers freely to all as such.]

14 For if they which are of the law [of Moses] be heirs, [in virtue of their being under that law, and they only] faith is made

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void,

void, [is quite shut out from the office of justifying] and the promise made of none effect. [Since they need it not, if they can make good their claim to a justifying righteousness without it, and the other nations of the world, to whom it equally belongs can have no benefit of it.]

15 Because the law [defining sin, and its punishment] worketh wrath: [by being broken] for where no law is, there is no transgression. [So that the case of the Jews having a law particularly given to them, trusting in an obedience to it which they had not, and rejecting the promise of life by faith, was not better, but worse in this respect than that of others.]

16 Therefore it [the promise] is of faith [made to faith, and to nothing else] that it might be by grace; [utterly excluding all merit or pretence of boasting, in man, and also] to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, [as it may be by faith, receiving it as a gift from God, but never can by works] not to that only which is of the law, [the Jews] but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, [whether Jews or Gentiles]

tiles] who is the father of us all. [In the example of his faith, and in the grant of an imputed righteousness.]

17 As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, [in a spiritual sense; for so it appears that *Gen. xvii. 5.* is to be understood; and think here what a depth there is in the words of scripture] before him [in the sight and purpose of God] whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, [mankind dead in trespasses and sins, by his covenant of life] and calleth those things which be not [mere nothings; you who read this, as to any power of raising yourself out of your dead state to a right of sonship, and inheritance of the promise through Abraham] as though they were: [and certainly are, what in his grace, foreknowledge, and purpose, he is pleased to make them.]

18 Who against hope believed in hope, [great comfort in the words, *against hope*, for man always sinful] that he might become the father of many nations; [of all, in every nation, believing like him] according to that

which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. [As the stars in number, *Gen. xv. 5.*]

19 And being not weak in faith, [when you know what sin is, and see your own, you will be hard put to it to keep your faith of plenary remission up to Abraham's strength] he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. [Make the application as you go along: there is the same natural impossibility of restoration to the favour of God, in the case of a sinner, by any works or endeavours of his own.]

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; [poor soul! often dost thou stagger at the promise, and add to thy sins by raising up a multitude of doubts and fears against the promise, grace, and truth of God] but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: [it is the excellence of faith to set the promise of God against all difficulties, and give him the whole glory of our salvation.]

21 And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was also able to perform.

form [So that faith, simply considered, is neither more nor less than believing God fully on his word, or that he gives us a right to, and will certainly perform what he promises. But where would Abraham's faith have been, if he had concluded against his right in the promise, without a further, inward assurance, as the only seal of it? the plain meaning of those who teach this doctrine, whether they mean it or not, is, that the word of God is not enough.]

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. [Observe, not as being actually his own, for that could only be by faultless works; but imputed to him for, or instead of it. The righteousness is God's or Christ's, and faith only the empty hand which receives it. Observe likewise how often the word imputed is repeated, and how precisely the meaning of it fixed, in this chapter.]

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24 But for ours also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe in him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, [and with him all believers, as members of his body]

25 Who was delivered for our offences, [not otherwise to be expiated, not by any repentance, will, or works of man] and was raised again for our justification. [Both to complete it in his own person, and for the full assurance of our faith that he had finished the work which the Father gave him to do, by his resurrection from the dead.]

The blessed Apostle has not yet retracted, nor said any thing to soften an assertion, which in its pure nakedness, and simplicity of meaning, is very offensive to many of his Readers. Possibly, your heart is rising up against it. But before you reject, or explain away his grand conclusion, that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law, consider what ground you have to set your foot on in the want of it, and what you will gain by turning aside to other expedients. He certainly labours hard, and reasons closely, to establish some great Gospel-truth; and whatever it is, no less evidently depends upon the right knowledge and belief of it than our justification, peace of conscience, and acceptance with God. To raise our hearts to a chearful trust and confidence in the God of our salvation, and ensure the blessed relief he is speaking of, in all its fulness to a sinful world,  
he



he says, it is of faith, that it might be by grace. Which is very clear and intelligible, if we suppose that the sovereignty, good pleasure, and rich mercy of God, is here held forth to us as the great security against all our fears; but dwindles into nothing, if the aid of works is to be called in to supply the deficiency of that grace. What are those works? Completely good? If they are, they will certainly justify themselves to a righteous God, who will not diminish one jot from the perfection of them, nor make us debtors to him for a grace we do not want. If they are not, the desert of all, and every one of them, according to the strict terms of law and justice, is condemnation: and how then can they be pleaded in support of our title to his favour? On account of their sincerity? You mistake; that word is neither Law nor Gospel. The Law says; *Do this, and live*; the Gospel says, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*; but though sincerity is a jewel, neither of them say a word of it as our righteousness, or covenant-title to justification. The Gospel finds us slain by the Law, carries on its deadly ministration in acknowledging the justice of its sentence, and then comes to us with an offer of life; but cannot possibly allow our works to be what they are not, nor admit the plea of

sincerity, either before or after faith, as a compensation for the defect of them. And therefore the Compilers of the ARTICLES and HOMILIES of the Church of *England*, with the generality of the Reformers in other countries, judged it necessary to understand the doctrine of *St Paul* as excluding works of all kinds from the office of justification; because, however sincere, yet as having confessedly some mixture of evil in them, they need a pardon, and must all be given up to mercy. The reason of which is founded in the unchangeable, inexorable nature of the divine Law, which cannot bend to the crookedness of man without destroying itself. If it was once supposed, that it might be dispensed with, or broken with impunity, in any one instance, it may easily be judged what use would be made of this liberty, to the advancing of endless pleas for indulgence against the authority and commands of God. But will not the opinion of salvation by faith without works, I mean without ascribing to them a justifying power, be more abused, and open a door to much greater licentiousness? It is hard to say what may not be abused in the hands of such a creature as man; but the doctrine has a quite different tendency; and if you will have patience with the Apostle only through one chapter more, he will meet  
with

with this very objection, which was thrown in his way with an air of triumph, and you will perceive to be as old as the preaching of the Gospel.

## C H A P. V.

1 **T**Herefore being justified [absolved from the guilt of sin, and accounted just] by faith, [and by nothing else] we have peace with God, [first and last, in life and death] through our Lord Jesus Christ, [the purchaser of it, and the Lord our righteousness.]

2 By whom also [perhaps the meaning is, in the drawing of his Spirit, if this verse is any thing more than a repetition and inculcation of the foregoing, the doctrine of which, as being the sum and substance of the Gospel, cannot be repeated too often, nor too vehemently inculcated] we have access by faith [neither is the repetition of the word faith to be overlooked, for we are slow of belief in the point, and all depends upon it] into this grace wherein we stand, [and with God's help resolve to stand fast; knowing that peace with God is by justification, justification through Jesus Christ, and all of grace]

grace] and rejoice [on sure grounds, the divine word and promise] in hope of the glory of God. [Of seeing God in his glory; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy.]

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also; [hard as it is to flesh and blood so to glory. The Apostle seems in haste to clear his doctrine of any imputation which might be cast upon it, by displaying the wonders which faith can do, far beyond any other principle] knowing that tribulation worketh patience; [not otherwise to be attained.]

4 And patience, experience; [of the great change wrought in us, and of the divine presence in our support] and experience, hope: [from the proof of faith in its fruits.]

5 And hope maketh not ashamed, [cannot be frustrated, nor deceive us. And the reason immediately given why it cannot, must be well observed, and remembered] because the love of God [in the freedom and fulness of his grace in Jesus Christ] is shed abroad in our hearts [the full belief, lively sense, and joyful persuasion of it] by the holy

holy Ghost which is given unto us. [Enabling us to say that Jesus is the Lord, and rest on him crucified for salvation. O fearful, dejected Christian, thou who knowest the greatness of that salvation, and thy own great want of it, and wouldest take a gift of value at once from the hand of man, why dost thou not receive and welcome it? Thou, whom the Spirit has brought to the door of faith, why dost thou not enter in? Charge it upon thy soul to give glory to God, by believing his word and promise; open all thy heart to his love, let it spring forward to meet his Christ. Rejoice in the Lord; the meaning is, to day, and every day of thy life.]

6 For when we were yet without strength, [the will to forsake, or power to atone for sin, and undo the unhappy effects of it] in due time [God's appointed, best time] Christ died for the ungodly. [Never be so foolish as to make the remainder of sin in thee, or thy being ungodly, a reason why Christ did not die for thee. Try what it is to believe in him for remission, without knowing and thinking thyself to be so.]

For

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure [one, or more instances of this may be found, perhaps it may be so that] for a good [or righteous] man some would even dare to die. [It is not necessary to suppose that the word *good* contains any thing more in it than the word *righteous*.]

8 But God commendeth his love towards us, [shews it to the greatest advantage, beyond our thoughts, beyond our hopes, beyond all our praises] in that while we were yet sinners [a word big with destruction, notwithstanding that sin in common esteem is a harmless thing; and especially, most men, if they suppose they have but a little of it, think they have nothing to fear] Christ died for us. [For all; for the best man that ever lived.]

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, [and therefore clean in God's sight] we shall be saved from wrath through him. [In our new state of justification, we can have no doubt of God's good will to us, and intention to save us for his sake, as the purchase of his blood.]

10 For

10 For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: [the sole procuring cause of his favour to the powerless, ungodly, sinners, enemies. Keep your eye steadily fixed upon these characters, and that death] much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. [Believers, as members of his body, being partakers of his resurrection, discharged from the debt of sin by that act, as it were an instrument put into their hands, and in him alive unto God; his resurrection to life being solely for their benefit, and as certainly theirs as it was his.]

11 And not only so, [we not only glory in tribulation, &c.] but we also joy in God, [with a well-grounded assurance, and far beyond what any, either Jews or Gentiles, could do without the knowledge of God in Christ. Or, if the Apostle is here advancing a step farther, as it should seem, and intended to affirm something still greater of the mighty power of faith, the meaning may be, that we also joy in God as our treasure and portion, the great object of our wishes, and supreme delight of our souls]

through

through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. [Perfect reconciliation through his blood ; kindling our love to God, ravishing our affections, and by a sweet force engaging us to make a full and free surrender of our hearts to him.]

If these are some of the genuine fruits of the peace of God ruling in the heart, let none disparage the faith by which we receive it in its glorious, happy fulness, as an enemy to good works, or what is better, real holiness, till they can find in all the stores of human wisdom a better reason, or stronger motive for the truth of inward renovation, than the love of God in our redemption by Jesus Christ. How necessary that redemption was, may be farther understood from the consideration of the state of mankind, as fallen and lost in Adam ; the truth and importance of which doctrine, or the nature and consequences of the first man's sin, the Apostle next establisheth, in order to shew the agreement there is in the manner of our Fall and Restoration, by two common Heads, or Representatives, Adam and Christ. The man who would attempt to explain this mystery, so as to make it clear to every understanding, and free it from all the difficulties



difficulties which may be raised against it, will certainly lose his labour. To those who acquiesce in the truth of scripture, and are content to be taught of God, the matter is thus represented.

12 Wherefore, [to prove and illustrate the necessity of universal redemption by Christ, it is to be well considered that] as by one man sin entered into the world, and death [not only the death of the body, but loss of happiness for ever] by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. [Which the Apostle here alleges as proved, by their being involved in the consequences of that sin: so answerably to this, and fully to undo the effects of it, by one man righteousness came to the world, and life eternal by righteousness, for that all in and through him are justified, in like manner as they were condemned in Adam.]

13 For until the law, [given by Moses, and re-enacting death as the punishment of sin] sin was in the world: [reigning unto death in every sense of the word, death temporal, spiritual, and eternal] but sin is not imputed [to condemnation, in a certain penalty]

nalty] when there is no law. [Fixing that penalty; which never was the case, before Moses, but in that given to Adam]

14 Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, [and therefore that men died in the mean while, was, though deservedly, yet not, strictly speaking, in consequence of their own sins, but of the sentence passed upon all in Adam] even over them who had not sinned [so as personally to incur the penalty of a law which was not personally given to them; but nevertheless death reigned over them] after the similitude of Adam's transgression, [as much as if it had been their own] who is the figure of him that was to come: [Jesus Christ, the common head and father of mankind in a law, or covenant of mercy, and standing to us in the same relation for life as our first father did for death.]

15 But [notwithstanding the general similitude of the two cases, yet now mark the happy difference, for] not as the offence, so also is the free gift. [Exactly answerable to that one offence, and no more. For supposing

posing that we are released from the guilt of Adam's sin, yet what shall we do with the countless sum of our own? sin being always sin, and all sin exposing us to the displeasure of God; which in what follows is necessarily implied in order to a right stating of the difference between our loss by the Fall, and the benefits we have by Christ] for if through the offence of one, many [all the race of mankind] be dead; [under a sentence of death] much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. [To all who receive it in penitence, and faith, as their sole relief from deserved condemnation. And the abounding of this grace and gift is, in the extent of it, reaching to all our own multiplied transgressions, as well as the remission of original sin, and taking effect, notwithstanding the imperfection of our obedience. Is it indeed the grace of God, and all a gift by grace, derived to us by the man Jesus Christ? Then turn the eye of your soul to the hope of the Gospel, and stand fast here in fulness of belief. Your obedience is necessary, but so defective that

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it must be forgiven, and if you plead it for life you are undone. God can give a great deal to us, but if we pretend to give any thing to him, in the way of satisfaction to justice, or payment to his law, we relinquish our claim to the grace which is by Jesus Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness.]

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift : [release only from the guilt of that one man's sin] for the judgment was by one [sin] to condemnation ; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. [Entire and everlasting, and only by the free gift, till we have no sin, or sin has no guilt.]

17 For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one [man ;] much more they which [with faith and thankfulness] receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, [let but our wants explain the words, and there will be an end of all disputes. Man's defective obedience, not very properly called sincerity, can never be any part of a justifying righteousness. And yet there is such a thing to be had, perfect righteousness wrought for us, freely offered, and  
fully

fully insured to us. Hear the words again, for they are enough to make every heart leap for joy—much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness] shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. [If the words, reign in life by one, Jesus Christ, do not mean solely by him, fully, finally, and for ever, our case is still desperate for any thing we can do to help ourselves. We should have been very anxious to know that we shall reign in life, and by what means, if we had not been told it; and now that we are, we turn our backs upon the glorious discovery, and with astonishing pride, and utter ignorance of the will of God for our salvation, look for it more in ourselves than in his gift.]

To prevent mistake in a point so difficult to be understood, and yet so necessary to be admitted, of death by one, and complete deliverance by one, the Apostle inculcates it in a variety of expressions all tending to the same purpose, and so as to leave no room for disbelief or evasion.

G 2      18 Therefore,

18 Therefore, [to establish this great truth, it is affirmed again and again that] as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation : even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners : [as evidently appears by their being under condemnation :] so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous. [Actually, and positively, in virtue of that one man's righteousness, given and imputed for justification unto life, and so made ours as to answer all the demands of law and justice.]

It might be asked, *To what then serveth the law?* If it is to be wholly set aside in the business of justification, of what use is it, and why was it given? To which it is answered ;

20 Moreover, the law entered, [came in between the promise of redemption given to Adam, and the time of its accomplishment by Jesus Christ] that the offence might abound : [not that they to whom it was given might sin more and more, but that they

they might know better what sin is, be more convinced of the danger of their condition by their offences against a positive law, and driven out of themselves to seek and accept deliverance from it in the way of God's appointing :] but where sin abounded, [as it did more especially in the Jews, by being committed against a plain and express law] grace did much more abound : [in the forgiveness of more sin, in the free gift of a perfect righteousness.]

21 That as sin [whether of the first man, or any others] hath reigned unto death, [eternal, without deliverance from it, as appears by its opposite in this verse] so might grace reign through righteousness [through which alone it can reign] unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. [In whom alone that righteousness is to be found, and through whom alone it is derived to us.]

The holy Spirit, in his own method of convincing the world, first of sin, and then of righteousness, has now by the blessed Apostle delivered to us a truth of great importance, full of

consolation, and peculiarly suited to our needs as sinners, that *being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* The peace is God's, of his creating and giving; and man is called upon to receive it thankfully, and with an humble faith, but has no more share in procuring it, than he had in making himself. Dear soul, understand; be not unskilful in the word of righteousness. What God accounts such, you have not; and yet the condition of mankind is hopeless without it. The rule is fixed; the law of God is unalterable as himself; you have not kept it; sin is found upon you: what will you do in this extremity? The Jew pleads his relation to *Abraham*, and looks for a justifying righteousness no where but in his observation of the law. The generality of Christians, excluding the ceremonial part of the Law, and absolute, unsinning conformity to the Moral, as the condition of acceptance with God, take refuge in what they call their Sincerity, as the great point of difference betwixt the old and new covenant, insist upon justification in part by their own obedience, and make no farther use of Christ and his righteousness than to supply the defect of it. *St Paul* makes no such distinction; but from the state of mankind fallen in *Adam*, under a sentence of death, and always sinful, takes occasion



casion to plead for such a remedy as is suited to the urgency of the case, declares the nature of it as plainly as words can do, and tells us precisely both what it is, and what it is not; that it is only and altogether the grace of God, and the gift of grace, the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to the glory of God, from the bowels of his mercy, and to the utter exclusion of all other pretensions, human merit or qualifications, as co-operating to the fulness and perfection of it. For whatever attainments one man may have above another, every man is a sinner to God in his whole person, guilty of the breach of his law, stands condemned by it, and wants a pardon. If therefore he assumes any thing to himself, as a claim to favour, or any ground or part of his justification before God, it must be in the confidence of a lie, and in utter ignorance of the strictness, extent, and purity of the law, which in the nature of it can make no allowance for defects, or so much as one act of disobedience. Keep your thoughts close to this idea of the divine law, establish it with the Apostle, as the sacred, invariable rule by which you are to be tried; and then ask yourself what part of your life has been answerable to it, or what must insure to you peace of mind and conscience in the very best state you ever will be in, but the gift of that righteousness

which you reject, or believe only in part? Consider that the law broken, subjects the offender to punishment, and delivers him into the hands of justice; consider that a justifying righteousness cannot possibly be made up of a mixture of sin and holiness, especially where the evil far exceeds the good; consider that there can be no justification, or title to an eternal reward, without a pure and spotless righteousness, and you will know at once where to look for it; and embrace the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, with many thanksgivings to God, as the very thing you want, the sovereign antidote against all your fears, and nothing less than life from the dead. You think you have your reasons for reserve and caution in the matter; and especially, that the notion, if taken in its full latitude, has a tendency to lay men asleep in a dangerous security, and to make them fearless of sin, or less concerned about a holiness of their own, when they are taught to place their hopes in that of another. On the contrary, it is alleged, that there is a very close connection between the doctrine of justification by an imputed righteousness, and holiness of life: that the sacredness of the law, the evil and danger of sin, and the holiness and purity of the divine nature, are thereby represented in the strongest point of light, and with the greatest fulness

fulness of conviction : that repentance will be begun and perfected, and a sincere desire of universal conformity to the will of God, from pure motives of love and gratitude, spring up in the soul, just in proportion as the gift is acknowledged, and the greatness of it believed. There is certainly a strong bond in the case ; and unless you will affirm that benefits of the highest kind, and wholly undeserved, weaken the sense of obligation, or that things work just a different way where God is concerned, from what they do between man and man ; you must allow that there never was a more powerful call to the heart, nor a stronger reason offered to mankind for their obedience, than the love of God in the acceptance of sinners, condemned, and helpless, to a state of favour, sonship, and a right to eternal life, by the sacrifice and obedience of Jesus Christ. Let us now attend to the Apostle's answer to the objection ; for it begun with his preaching ; and the doctrine he so zealously maintains, as the great benefit we have by Christ, and the soul's joy, rest, and security, is still, generally speaking, but half understood, treated by some with coldness and indifference, and rejected with abhorrence by others.

## C H A P. VI.

1 **W**HAT shall we say then? [concerning the tendency of the doctrine here advanced, of righteousness and salvation by grace, without the deeds of the law, that is, without any desert, legal or equitable claim on the part of man, and solely by the grace of God?] shall we [therefore] continue in sin, that grace [or mercy] may abound? [and God be more glorified in the forgiveness of it? to which the Apostle answers with holy indignation.]

2 God forbid: [and the design of this chapter is to shew that the doctrine when rightly understood must necessarily have a quite different effect.]

The objection, it must be owned, is formidable, and required a careful answer. But now observe that the strength of it consists altogether in the supposition that he really did teach and establish salvation by grace, or the imputed righteousness of Christ, through faith, in the plain, simple meaning of the words, and to the exclusion of all human righteousness, works, or merit, from any share in our justification. For if  
he

if he had intended solely, or chiefly, to exclude works done before faith, or works of the ceremonial law, and not all works whatever, from the office of justification, there could have been no room for the objection ; and now, if ever, was the time for him to have had recourse to such distinctions, and strike at the root of this prejudice, by denying the ground of it. He was hard pushed, and might have replied that his meaning was mistaken. He certainly would have said, as some of his Expositors have done since, that doing is all ; or that justification unto life, was not to be understood as if it was all Christ's work, but in part the result of our own obedience ; or that, according to the tenor of the new Covenant, sincerity will be accounted to men for righteousness ; or that Faith is chiefly submission to the doctrine of Christ, in opposition to all other religions, or that the great design of the Gospel was to teach mankind a more pure morality, and furnish them with better helps for obedience, than they had before. O Jesus ! guide my heart and pen. Let me not lose my portion in thee, by diminishing from the sacredness of thy law, shutting my eyes against thy light, refusing thy blessed helps, or denying any part of thy truth. I believe that sincerity is precious in the sight of God ; I believe that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord* ; I know the disciples of Christ cannot

not shew their love to him but by keeping his commandments ; I believe that perfect conformity to the will of God is the glory of angels, that we are redeemed to it, and for it, and that he who comes nearest to it is the happiest man in this world ; I believe that the great inquiry at last will be into the reality and soundness of our faith, as manifested by its fruits. But then it is also evident, that a sense of God's peace, and the love of Christ, saving us from the curse of sin, and working out a perfect righteousness for us to appear in before God, is first in the order of evangelical Doctrine, and that if this foundation is not laid, no lively obedience will follow. The Gospel does teach a pure morality, from a right knowledge of God ; Christ does bind the yoke of his commandments upon the necks of his disciples, and the Spirit is given to make it easy, by making it their free choice, and binding it upon their hearts. The Apostle faithfully carries on this design, requires the utmost sincerity of endeavour, and inculcates the entire mortification of sin ; he is more for doing, in this very chapter, than perhaps the generality of his Readers will think either reasonable or possible. But then he lays the foundation of all this where it only can be laid, in Christ our life ; and answers the objection now before us, not by denying any part of the doctrine he had delivered, not by  
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finching from his testimony, not by secreting or invalidating the great Gospel-truth of peace with God, righteousness and salvation by Jesus Christ, as the hope, comfort, and sole relief of condemned sinners; but by representing the death of Christ; and the benefit we have by it, as our death unto sin; first to the guilt and condemnation of it in him, and then, by a due consideration of its accursed nature as manifested in his death, to the power of it in ourselves.

—How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? [dead to sin by the death of Christ: we, as members of his body, dying, and paying the debt of sin in, and with him. Can you, says he, be ignorant of this fundamental point of Christian doctrine?]

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into [the saving efficacy of] his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: [the virtue and reality of it, in respect of condemnation, and as if it had been our own offering for sin. This then is the ground of the Apostle's exhortation, and not, as is commonly supposed,  
any

any part of the exhortation itself. The use and improvement next follows] that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory [glorious grace and power] of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. [As men dead to their former state, and that in order to their resurrection to a new and quite different kind of life.]

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death: [assuredly believing it to be our own death to the guilt of sin, and that the law has no more right to accuse or condemn us, than it has over dead men] we shall be [we shall think ourselves strongly obliged to be; if we are true believers, we shall be] also in the likeness of his resurrection: [to a victory over sin.]

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, [savingly; both to the satisfaction of the divine justice, and the destruction, or disappearing of the old nature] that the body of sin might be destroyed, [totally, and in all respects, as by death] that henceforth we should not serve sin. [Any more than if we were actually dead.]

7 For



7 For he that is dead, [as we are in Christ, if we know what it is to believe in him] is freed from sin. [The power of corruption is at an end, and the will of finning is dead with the man.]

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him : [that our death in and with him is in order to a resurrection state of holiness and purity, as his was to glory, once for all.]

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin [was slain by it, and for it] once ; [only] ; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. [Never to die for sin again.]

11 Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin ; [to the condemnation of it : no more obnoxious to its curse than if ye were actually dead, and for ever incapable of committing it] but alive unto God [in the power of a new obedience, and both] through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal [or now dead] body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, [the devoted subjects of his grace, and enabled so to offer up yourselves] as those that are alive from the dead; [from death and condemnation, through faith in his mercy] and your members as instruments of righteousness [both that you are invested with, and that righteous practice which is required of you] unto holiness, [in yourselves.]

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: [either to condemn, or enslave you] for ye are not under the law, [bound to the rigour of it, working for life, and continually tormented with the fear of death for every defect] but under grace. [Releasing you from this hard condition, to perform a free and acceptable service. That this is the meaning of the words, appears from the whole tenor of the Apostle's discourse, and especially from the following verse.]

15 What

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, [of works, as a covenant of life] but under grace? [abolishing that covenant, introducing a better hope, and establishing our peace on the mercy of God, and the merits of Christ] God forbid. [Far be such a thought from the heart of every believer.]

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, [the certain consequence of sin, in all men, in all states, under all covenants, if its service is chosen, if there is not a resolute turning from it] or of obedience unto [a professed subjection to the law of] righteousness? [All is in the yielding, or bent of the will. Sin is always death; and though obedience of itself is not life, because attended with imperfection, it is the fruit and proof of it, and our inclining to it, and progress in it, will have a happy issue.]

17 But God be thanked, that ye [who] were the servants of sin; are now no longer enslaved to it] but [that] ye have obeyed from the heart [received with full assurance

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of faith] that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, [from the curse of it, by their baptism into the death of Christ, the chief point of that form of doctrine which was delivered them] ye became the servants of righteousness. [Under him who bought and made you free for this end.]

Note, the Apostle does not affirm that they were actually free from all sin; but is here all along exhorting them to a total conquest of it, from the consideration of their being freed from the condemning power of it by Christ.

19 I speak after the manner of men, [according to the truth of your condition, as men; that is, what I am repeatedly saying of your bondage to sin, is universally man's state and nature, without and before Christ, and what you cannot but have experience of in yourselves] because of the infirmity of your flesh: [now behold your freedom] for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants  
to

to righteousness, unto holiness. [As you well may, with the love of God and of Christ working in your hearts. That love draws strongly; do you yield yourselves to the sweet force of it.]

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. [Under the power, and wholly at the command of another master.]

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? [Mark the Christian state, and the Apostle's call to it; it is to be ashamed of sin, as the disgrace and ruin of our nature] for the end of those things is death. [Let this be firmly believed, and deliverance from the guilt and power of sin will be gladly embraced.]

22 But now being made free from sin; [by the grace of God, reconciling you to himself, and receiving you to the happy condition of his children in Christ] and become servants to God, [by your profession, and free choice] ye have [if ye value the blessed privilege, and resolve to keep it, ye will have] your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death: [the repetition of this great truth, considering how little it was known before the preaching of the Gospel, how weakly it is apprehended at all times, and that it is the foundation of our belief in Christ, is far from being unnecessary] but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. [The design of this Epistle is to persuade mankind that it IS the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, by faith in him as the fountain of life, and the sole possessor of a justifying righteousness, and cannot possibly be the desert of our own holiness.]

What I would recommend to the Reader's attention, and desire to have deeply impressed on my own heart, as the result of this chapter, is the believer's obligation to newness of life, and the advantage he has for it in the faith of Christ crucified. His death the Apostle authorizes us to call our own, in the sense of payment and satisfaction to justice; and then, with great force of persuasion, and reasoning peculiarly Christian, represents it as the death of our old state in all respects, both as deliverance from the condemnation of it by our union with the death of Christ, and as death to the corruption of it, in order to  
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our rising again, and living unto God, after his example. You see therefore where the foundation of your faithful obedience is to be laid, viz. in the great benefit, or salutary effect of the death of Christ, believers being united to him in it, and he by the appointment of God dying, not for himself, but in our stead, as our Representative, and to the end that in the account of law and justice his death might be reputed ours, the expiation of our sin, discharge from suffering, and restoration to the favour of God. Possibly you may call to mind on this occasion what the Apostle says, 1 Cor. iii. 11. *Other foundation no man can lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*; considered in his grace and love, as paying the price of our redemption with his blood, and making us partakers of all he did, and suffered, by taking us into himself. St Paul is there speaking of the work we are to build upon this foundation; and supposes it may be wood, hay, stubble, as well as gold, silver, and precious stones. For so long as man is man, and has a liberty of frustrating the grace of God, or improving it to the end for which it is given, the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ, as the sole author and worker of it, may be perverted and abused. Purity of heart, holiness of life, and willing subjection to God, are not the certain and necessary effects of faith; if they were, the exhortations

of Scripture, and particularly of this chapter, to an entire mortification of sin from the consideration of the death of Christ, would be needless. But then it may well be affirmed, that this is the Spirit's method of illumination, and quickening to strength in the inner man; and that there is great force of argument, great advantage for pure obedience, and a powerful inducement to it, in the belief and acknowledgement of complete deliverance from the guilt of sin, and restoration to eternal life, by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. And if you are unwilling to admit the operation of this principle, and its influence on the heart and practice, consider on what grounds, and for what reasons you are led to suspect the utility of it. You must either allege that the nature of man is so utterly depraved as to be incapable of gratitude; or that God's favours have a different effect from the kindnesses we do to one another; or that the benefit supposed to be conferred, instead of engaging to obedience, is of such a nature as to frustrate that end, by making Christ the sole procuring cause of our salvation, and dependence on his righteousness and merits, with a renunciation of every other claim, the ground of our hope towards God. It is acknowledged that the doctrine may be abused; but the consequence drawn from hence, either that it is false, or not proper to be insisted



insisted on because of its supposed ill tendency, must by no means be admitted. The Deist objects to the Gospel-remedy in every sense, and contends that faith in Christ for the remission of sins is prejudicial to the interests of virtue. But I suppose you do not think this a reason for giving up your faith, and have your answer ready; That thereby you have attained to such a knowledge of the sinfulness of sin, of the justice, holiness, and love of God, and of the necessity of holiness in yourself, as you could not possibly have acquired in any other way; and that you regard the doctrine as a powerful incitement to unrestrained subjection, grateful obedience, and loyalty of heart. And why then should you be afraid to view the mercy of redemption in its whole extent, or so far give up the point to the enemies of Revelation, as to own that the sense of duty, obligation, love to the author of the benefit, is in danger of being lost or impaired by the greatness of it? *Behold!* says St John, calling upon us to behold with great admiration, *what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon, or manifested to, us, that we, so astonishingly unworthy, should be called, that is, actually be, the sons of God!* And what then? Is the enemy, the rebel, so pardoned, so favoured, so saved, snatched from the brink of hell, and translated into God's family and kingdom as a son, and heir of all the

riches of it, more corrupted, more undone by the grace, and set at liberty to follow the career of his lusts? The Apostle thinks not, and expressly mentions the only natural inference which can be drawn from the superabundant love of God—*Every man that hath this hope in him, (embracing it on right grounds, fired with the prospect it sets before him of seeing God as he is, and purposing to retain his hope) purifieth himself, even as he is pure,* 1 John iii. 1—3. Gratitude runs low in the nature of man; but if there is one spark of it in the heart, the belief of deliverance from death, and eternal life merited for us by the Son of God, will kindle it into a flame. But let that be as it will, if you are still resolved to take up this prejudice against the great Scripture-motive for returning to God, if you can perceive no drawing in what it calls *the cords of a man*, and *the bonds of love*, if the doctrine of salvation by the imputed righteousness of Christ, including his whole obedience in life and death, may be converted into poison; let the consequence be what it will, yet there is no other remedy for mankind, unless you can plead a perfect, unsinning obedience to the law of God, in every thought, word, and deed, from the time you could discern between good and evil, to the last hour of your life. It will be observed that this is once more entering a protest against the received notion  
of

of sincerity, considered as a mitigation of the rigour of the law, and the peculiar felicity of the new covenant. I desire to be so understood, if the meaning is to put it in the place of Christ. I would gladly be informed in what part of Scripture God is represented as granting any such relaxation, or dispensing with the utmost strictness of obedience, on account of weakness in man, on any pretence whatsoever; and must be permitted to say, over and over again, that the belief of such an indulgence would not only be injurious to the unchangeableness of the divine nature and will, but in effect a total abolition of the law, as it would be establishing an opinion that it might be broken with impunity, by allowance from God himself. Certainly this is not establishing the law in its fulness and supreme authority, but wretched tampering with it, and setting up a claim of human invention, acknowledged defect, veiled under the decent word Sincerity, instead of the absolute performance it cannot but alike require at all times from every soul of man. O Jesus! I see righteousness enough in thee to answer all the demands of law and justice! but I see no such thing in myself or others; and thy servant *Paul* has taught me to tremble for my guilt, and appeal from myself to thee, in the very best state of sincere obedience to which I shall ever attain. Let thy word, quick  
and

*and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, lay all naked and open within me, as I always am to thee. Preserve me from the childish ignorance of looking for salvation in myself, or any thing but thee; and make my love to thee for the great things thou hast done for lost mankind a holy fire in my soul burning continually, and manifesting itself in all such acts of duty and fidelity as thou requirest of me, unfeigned, pure obedience, devotion of heart, and the glorious liberty of thy children. I know it is said, that if men are taught to place their confidence in the righteousness of Christ, they will think it unnecessary to proceed any farther; and that therefore a persuasion of our reconciliation with God is too high a lesson to be the first learned in the school of Christ, and must be the result of our attainments, and proficiency in holiness; though what measure of it will serve the purpose we are not told, nor when we may leave off confessing ourselves to be miserable sinners. But if we are not to set out with this persuasion, (knowledge of sin and repentance for it always supposed) it is hard to say when we may take it up, or how we can make any beginning with Christ; certainly not under a covenant of works, or without dis-*  
claiming

claiming all self-justifying pretensions; and I verily believe, whatever is surmised to the contrary, that none go farther in the practice of an acceptable obedience than the generality of those who are established in the sense of God's peace by Christ's righteousness, and make it the foundation of all they do.

The Apostle having brought his charge against Jews and Gentiles, both as sinners themselves, and fallen under a sentence of death in *Adam*; is now going, with the utmost sincerity of confession, and true poverty of spirit, to represent the state of mankind in his own person, and by a farther display of the remainder of sin in the best of men, to evince the necessity of taking refuge in the offer of grace. For if *sin is the transgression of the law*, and *the wages of sin is death*, there is no hope but in his triumphant, joyful exclamation, — *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

## C H A P. VII.

1 **KNOW** ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the law, [the Jews particularly] that the law [all law in the nature and reason of it] hath dominion over a man [to bind to obedience, or the suffering

suffering its penalty in case of transgression] as long as he liveth? [either  $\text{H}\epsilon$ , the man, or  $\text{I}\tau$ , the law; for it is all one; and the meaning is, that in order to our being freed from the condemnation of the law, it must first lose its right, either by the death of the subject, or extinction of its own authority. So that the Apostle here resumes what he had said in the beginning of the foregoing chapter, of our death and burial with Christ; to the intent he might consider our new state in him as the cessation, or ending of the law, and ourselves as much out of the reach of it as dead men are out of the power of any law. Which he farther proves and illustrates by the well known instance of a woman's being freed from the law of her husband, and at liberty to marry again, in case of his death.]

2 For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth: but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adultress: but if her husband  
be

be dead, she is freed from that law; so that she is no adultress, though she be married to another man.

I conceive the Apostle's design in this similitude is to shew the absolute necessity of the death of the law, or our being dead to it, before we can be joined to Christ. O! what pains are taken to conjure up the ghost of the law, and how many mistaken souls frighten themselves all their days with the ghastly apparition of it, instead of seeing it slain by Christ, and rejoicing over it as a dead enemy. Reader, do not here charge me with Antinomianism: I abhor the imputation: It is the desire of my soul to say with the Psalmist, *Lord, what love have I unto thy law!* I believe it to be the rule of our duty, and that it will be the measure of our reward or condemnation. I believe from my heart that we are only miserable by transgressing it, and can never be happy but in conforming to it. But then I must learn from *St Paul* the Spirit's order of coming to the love of it. And I understand from him that I can never look upon it with a friendly eye till I see the sting of death taken out of it, never be in a fruit-bearing state according to it, nor delight in it as a rule, till I am freed from it as a covenant. Hear what he says; and observe how he applies and improves the notion he had  
advanced

advanced of a death of, or to, the law ; for he speaks of both, and both are little enough to confirm us in the belief of our great privilege.

4 Wherefore, [in like manner] my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ ; [of which ye are members, and as such died with him] that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, [and ye with him] that we should bring forth fruit unto God. [In our new state of union with Christ by faith ; which we could not before.]

5 For when we were in the flesh, [in a legal, or natural state only, without faith, without Christ, without the Spirit, left to ourselves, and with no better life nor higher principle in us than that of our flesh, or whole nature as men] the motions of sin which were by the law, [discovered, and condemned by it, but alive and active in spite of it] did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. [The penalty of the law while it is in force as a covenant.].

6 But



6 But now [mark it well] we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held ; [what, delivered from the law ? and that, because it is dead ? Yes, as to the condemning power of it. It is a bold word, but apostolical, and has great comfort in it ; for if the law lives, we die ; and St Paul here leads us to conclude that, till we consider it as dead, we shall never attain to life, as that signifies the offering up of the heart to God, and freedom of spirit in his service. For it is upon this view of the matter that he says] that we should serve in newness of spirit, [either our own, or of *the* Spirit, the great Agent in the new dispensation of life and peace with God by Jesus Christ, working faith, renovating the affections, and subduing the stubbornness of the will, by a sense of mercy] and not in the oldness of the letter. [Inexorably severe, working wrath, terrifying the conscience, and merely a state of bondage and slavish fear ; which speaks only one language—do this, and live ; transgress, and die ; but neither helps to obey, nor has any word of relief for the poor soul in case of disobedience.]

7 What

7 What shall we say then ? is the law sin ? [considering what has been said of the death of the law, or man's dying to it, the objection is not impertinent. It might be presumed that what stands so much in the way of our salvation, as that it must of necessity be removed, has some desperate malignity in it. But this is all mistake ; and the answer is] God forbid. [That any man should entertain such an opinion of it :] nay, I had not known sin [neither fully by the nine first commandments, nor what a strength and being it has in me, nor the great evil and fatal consequence of it] but by the law : [defining sin, tracing it up to the heart, working against it, and forbidding it on pain of death ;] for I had not known lust to be what it is, so prevalent, so stubborn, so deadly] except the law [of the tenth commandment, and observe, the moral law] had said, Thou shalt not covet. [In that one word, covet, implying lusting against the will of God, the conscientious examiner of his heart is taught to see a great deal of inordinate selfishness, and many tempers in himself contrary to the spirituality of the law.]

Stop

Stop a while till you have asked yourselves the necessary question, whether you really believe the doctrine of Revelation here delivered, *viz.* that coveting, or evil lusting, is sin, and, according to the nature of all sin, gives you up to the desert of it? The Apostle here informs us, that as through want of attention to the tenth commandment, and its proper distinction from all the rest, he continued for a time ignorant of sin, so it never is known, in its root and whole extent, without a due consideration of this law. For just in proportion as you admit this point or not, you will either come full into the truth, or turn aside to error, receive Christ in the fulness of his salvation, or diminish the glory of it to your own great loss; and especially, having been accustomed to bring only gross sin to account, and overlook what the Apostle knew by the law to be sin, and had a piercing view of in himself, you will be apt to think that he could not possibly be speaking of his own condition at the time of writing this Epistle. But whether he does or not, I will be bold to say it is yours at the time of reading it, whoever you are; and perhaps when you know what sin is, and where to look for it, as well as he did, you will neither be disposed to clear him nor yourself.

8 But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. [So far was the command from controuling, subduing, and killing sin at the root, that it only irritated and inflamed the evil in my nature] for without the law [forbidding and condemning] sin was dead. [Undiscovered in its seat and principle, and unknown as to its power, activity, and deadly nature.]

9 For I was alive without the law once : [thought myself safe from condemnation, before I entered into a due consideration of the law, and took an exact measure of myself by it, both outwardly and inwardly] but when the commandment came, [in its full extent, peremptory demand, and certain penalty] sin revived, [was made apparent to my heart and conscience, in the strong resistance I discovered in myself to the perfection of the command, and want of conformity to it] and I [being a transgressor of the commandment] died. [Found myself guilty of death.]

This is the trying, turning point: Reader, you must not trifle here. The knowledge of sin by  
the

the law, and of death for sin, will lead you to your remedy, and make you thankful for it; but as sure as you keep off any part of the law from your heart and conscience, deny your sin, or extenuate the guilt of it, you are in a state of unbelief, and ignorant both of Law and Gospel.

10 And the commandment which was ordained to life, [if it had been kept] I found to be unto death. [Having been broken.]

11 For sin taking occasion by the commandment, [exerting its strength in spite of the commandment, and raging the more for being restrained] deceived me, [drew me into rebellion, as the serpent did Eve] and by it [denouncing death for transgression] slew me.

12 Wherefore the law is [not sin, as might be objected, nor the cause of sin, but holy; [in its nature, end and purpose] and the commandment holy, [in itself] just, as coming from God] and good. [For men.]

13 Was then that which is good, made death unto me? [Was it ordained for that end, or has it any such tendency in itself?] God forbid. But sin, [which was in me before the coming of the law] that it might

appear sin, [be discovered to me in its strength and unconquerable malignity] working death in me by that which is good ; [and for that very reason, because it is good] that sin by the commandment [and by stubbornly opposing itself to it] might become exceeding sinful. [And be found utterly inexcusable.]

14 For we know that the law is spiritual : [holy in its nature, and searching the thoughts and intents of the heart] but I am carnal, sold under sin. [Confess my natural corruption and weakness, and lament it as a state of hard bondage.]

You will perhaps be startled at this ; and taking it for granted that you yourself are not *sold under sin*, conclude that *St Paul* could not possibly be speaking of the state he was then in. Come therefore to the trial. You think the state here described much too abasing for the Apostle ; but low as it seems to you, it may be beyond any attainments of your own, and a great deal more than you can say for yourself. See if you can accompany him in what follows.

15 For that which I do, I allow not : [he did what he afterwards saw reason to condemn.

demn. What then? Did he live in gross, open sin of any kind? No, but nevertheless he sinned, according to the spirituality and strictness of the law. He did before Ananias, and confessed it; *Acts* 23. he might upon other occasions. You would call such slips venial, or sins of infirmity, and suppose they will not be brought to account. He durst not; he thought otherwise; he had a right knowledge of sin, with a tender feeling of the least motions towards it, and in case of transgression knew of no remedy but one.] For what I would, that do I not; [nothing is more certain than that he did a great deal, and had no superior in zeal, labour, and self-denial; and yet he was not satisfied with it as the ground of his hope, and the quieting of his conscience. Here the generality of his Readers will be ready to bring him off, as they do themselves, on the score of his sincerity. He wants not such comforters. He is making his way to Christ as fast as he can, through a full confession of defect. And if you do not chuse to follow him, he will leave you to make the best of your fine word; for it is nothing else but a

false refuge in itself, and in the mouths of many who make use of it, far from being a reality.] But what I hate, that I do. [Can you say this? Hate is a great word, and enough to make as great a saint as you can suppose Paul to have been. Still this would not do for *him*. He is very hard to please in his own case; and as a fallen son of Adam, doing at times even what he hated, he has not yet found sure footing.]

16 If then I do that which I would not, [not sinning grossly, wilfully, and habitually, beware of this mistake] I consent unto the law that it is good. [In every respect; both as regulating the outward behaviour, and the inward motions of the heart, and obliging to punishment as well as duty. Perhaps your consent to the goodness of the law does not go quite so far; and yet if you come short of this knowledge, your understanding of scripture, of Christ, of yourself, will at the best be very imperfect.]

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. [As a slave may be said not to do what he is constrained to; nevertheless, he is still a slave, sensible  
of



of his condition, and wants redemption. So St Paul groaned under his burden. So all Christians do, and must groan while they are in the body, *2 Cor. v. 4. Rom. viii. 23.* In the mean time our comfort is, that the Sin we feel as our plague and torment, works its own cure, by making us long and prepare for the time of complete redemption. Only let it be carefully observed, that when the Apostle says, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me, it is not to extenuate the guilt of sin, or furnish an excuse for it; but to shew that notwithstanding any contrary willing, or efforts against it, it still subsists in its root, and is chargeable upon us; and this in order to demonstrate the necessity of deliverance from the curse of sin, or justification unto life by faith in a Redeemer. Lord, keep me in the humility of this chapter, and from the Perfectionist's pride of thinking that I am not concerned in it.]

18 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh [or nature, denominated flesh, as being the principal seat of corruption] dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good

I find not. [Invariably at all times, fully and perfectly.]

19 For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. [Where is the man who can say he does all the good he ought, and wishes to do, and none of the evil which he thinks himself bound, and desires to avoid? And why then may not *St Paul* be understood to say that of his own state, as he does twice, which every other man must think and say of himself, and certainly will, the more he knows of himself, and the nearer he comes to perfection?]

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. [He considers himself as two different persons, actuated by two contrary natures. Good and evil, by a work of divine grace were separated in him, and adverse to each other. His will, more properly himself, was steadily on the side of good, but the evil principle still subsisted; though dying, was not dead, clogged his endeavours, and by occasionally counteracting his will, bound him over to punishment. Your case is not a jot better;

better ; you cannot say you have no corruption left, and you must not plead for the harmlessness of it. Confess the truth, and own the consequence. Let not the sin of nature, so grievous to the Apostle, and presented so full to your view in his person, always pass for nothing.]

21 I find then a law, [not in the sense of right, but strength and continuance] that when I would do good, evil is present with me. [Not always, nor generally, to prevail ; but always present, and ready to solicit, and if once prevailing, fatal.]

22 For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man. [I suppose no unregenerate man can say this.]

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. [I suppose that a regenerate man may say this ; not in respect of the general prevalence, but remainder of indwelling sin.]

We are so accustomed to overlook the depravation of nature in coveting, or evil lusting, and so confident that it will not be laid to our charge,  
if

if it is in some measure resisted, and does not generally break out into gross acts of transgression, that for this reason we do not understand the Apostle when he is imputing it to himself for sin, lamenting his bondage under it, exulting in the grace that is by Jesus Christ, and holding it forth to all as the necessary means of deliverance from the guilt that is upon us; and therefore fly to some other method of interpretation, as supposing neither him nor ourselves to be culpable on this account before God, and obnoxious to the sentence of his law. It is a hard point of Revelation, and requires all his humility to say;

24 O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! [which I feel in myself, and know by conviction from the Spirit of God to be death. The answer, if rightly taken, is worth a world; and the blessed Apostle, struck with the grace of deliverance, and knowing that no words could express it, pours out his sense of it in a devout strain of thanksgiving.]

25 I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord—

The important question now comes on; What does he thank God for? For a more spiritual,  
perfect

perfect obedience through Christ, say those, who suppose he has been representing one convinced of sin, and struggling against it, but who has not yet obtained power over it. And Dr *Whitby* in particular says, “that to suppose St *Paul* here “speaking in his own person, or the person of “a regenerate man, is as great an instance of the “force of prejudice, and heat of opposition, to “pervert the plainest truths as can be haply “produced.” To which it may be replied, I hope without prejudice, or heat of opposition, that if the Apostle is here supposed to speak of complete victory over sin in himself through Jesus Christ, or power communicated by him; then our salvation by Christ consists solely in a new and better state of holiness, and he is here made to conclude directly against his own assertion, that *a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law*, ch. iii. 28. And then also, in summing up the great benefit we have by Christ, *ch. viii. 1.* he makes use of the wrong word, and instead of saying, *there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*, he should have said, there is no corruption. But he knew very well what he affirmed; as the Reader will perceive, upon considering what was the natural inference to be drawn from the foregoing discourse, or what is properly relief in the case as there stated. *I am carnal, I do not the good I would, I do the evil I would*

would not, &c. that is to say, " I am still imperfect, but not therefore condemned, because " Christ died for me."—This is sense, this is the voice of the Gospel, and matter of great rejoicing: but not so, if the Apostle is here putting the case of an unregenerate person, or one not in Christ, or not yet perfect in Christ; for to him, upon the supposition, he had no such consolation to administer, nor could he give him any assurance of freedom from condemnation, but by his arriving at such a state of perfection, as not to stand in need of a pardon. It is therefore evident, that he thanks God for Christ, as our deliverer, in the sense he has all along been pleading for and establishing, *viz.* as our atonement and righteousness in himself, and not because of any holiness wrought in us. He knew of no such salvation, disowned any such title to it, looked for it altogether in another way, tells us plainly what he wanted, and all want Christ for, and would not have thought himself obliged to any man for ascribing any such faintship to him as would frustrate the grace of God, and make the death and merits of Christ of no effect. On the contrary, he has been representing himself as *sold under sin*, or under the tyranny of an imperious master, willing indeed to act in all points agreeably to the dictates of law, mind, and conscience, but hindered in some measure by indwelling sin, and  
never

never attaining to that perfection which the law absolutely requires. Look now at yourself, whoever you are, and let conscience tell you whether you are not the person here described. Look round about you, and see whether others of your acquaintance, are not in the same condition. Hear what the very best of them are ready to say of themselves. Look well at the scope of the Epistle, consider the grand point to be established in it, of salvation by faith, and then say whether St *Paul* is not evidently speaking of himself, and of all other saints; or what can be deliverance for man always sinful, but the free grace of God, as exhibited and offered in Jesus Christ? See your sin, as *Paul* did, and death for sin, and then you will know what obligations you have to Christ, and what he thanked God for. You may think, and be very positive, that some expressions here made use of are neither consistent with a regenerate state, nor with what the Apostle affirms of himself elsewhere; but say and do what you will, if you are in earnest with the Law, as the declared will of God, and do not destroy the sacredness of it, and make it bend to your corruption, by talking of lesser sins as trifles, when it allows of no deviations, you will find the truth of them in yourself; a carnal nature, or stubbornness of the flesh, keeping you back from that perfection of obedience which the law demands,

mands, and cannot but require on pain of death. The Apostle had this knowlege, after his conversion; and whoever has not, never yet entered upon a state of regeneration, as that signifies being grafted into Christ, or receiving him from God, as a gift for life. When he declares that notwithstanding the remainder of sin in his flesh, his will stood in opposition to it, probably you will allow him to speak like himself. But you cannot drive him from his purpose; you can never bring him to allow that willing is doing, or that the law will be satisfied with any thing less than full performance, or that the transgression of it, much or little, is not sin, or that the wages of sin is not death. He saw the contrary of all this with a piercing eye, is labouring with apostolic charity to bring you to the same belief and acknowledgement, and if he can but convince you of your disease, will tell you of a remedy every way adequate to it.

If it is objected, that though what has been repeatedly said of the strictness and inexorable severity of the law should be allowed its full force with regard to the Jews, yet it is not applicable to those who never were under the law of *Moses*; it may be answered, that the reasoning on this head is not thereby invalidated. For all men are under a law of some kind or other. Christians take it for granted that they are under a law  
to



to God, and under that very law, as to the moral part of it; and whatever the rule is which any think themselves bound to, nothing but full conformity to it can be pleaded for obedience, or exempt them from a charge of sin in the breach of it.

Now hear the Apostle once more speaking his sense of the two opposite principles in the regenerate, others having only one.

— So then, with the mind I myself [consent to, and would] serve the law of God: [to fulfil it perfectly, and according to all its demands] but with the flesh, [flesh more or less till death] the law of sin. [Not to live in it, or allow it in any one instance, but so as that I cannot acquit myself of it in my very best estate, and am under a necessity of looking for help and deliverance out of myself; my belief of which I have already declared, and do again most joyfully and thankfully declare as follows.]

#### C H A P. VIII.

1 THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, [by faith] who walk not after the flesh,

flesh, [not thinking to put themselves in a justified state by any human, natural endeavours, works, or performances] but after the Spirit. [In the belief of the Gospel; therefore called the Spirit, because He is the great Agent in the dispensation of grace, working a perfect righteousness in Christ, and faith in others to receive it. See how evidently and fully the Apostle explains himself to this sense in the following verses; and consider how inconsistently those make him argue, who interpret walking after the Spirit only of an obediential frame of heart. Believers do think themselves obliged so to walk, but it is not the point here insisted on. Observe what he says:]

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, [the law fulfilled for life by the Spirit in Christ Jesus, and by him only] hath made me free from the law of sin and death. [Sin working death, wherever it is found, and therefore to every man. Believe this first, or else instead of trusting wholly in Christ for life, you will fly to the vain expedient of your own righteousness; no matter how, or by whom it is wrought, if it  
leaves

leaves you short of that absolute perfection which the law requires for life.]

3 For what the law could not do, [confer a justifying righteousness] in that it was weak [insufficient for this end; not from any defect in itself, but [through the flesh, [corrupt nature, sure to fail in the obedience it demands] God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, [to be the head of redemption to it] and for sin [to purge and expiate it] condemned sin in the flesh: [disarmed it of its condemning power in the same nature which had sinned, by introducing a perfect righteousness into it.]

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled [as it must of all necessity be fulfilled] in us, [unable to fulfil it of ourselves] who walk not after the flesh, [as before explained] but after the Spirit. [Revealing the covenant of grace, uniting us to Christ by faith, and making us partakers of all he did and suffered. Reject this method of salvation, quit this hope, and then mark your state, and know your doom.]

5 For they that are after the flesh, [that is, according to common interpretation, not

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led and governed by the Spirit in practice, "still under the direction of the flesh, and "its sinful appetites," says Mr Locke] do mind the things of the flesh: [very true; but then this is only affirming a thing of itself, or saying it twice over. And therefore to clear St Paul of this absurdity, we suppose, that by "they that are after the flesh," he means those who are destitute of faith, or not in Christ; and of them he affirms, that let them pretend or do what they will, they are still under the prevalence of flesh and its appetites, and cannot act from a higher principle, or a nature which they have not. And it must be observed that he is now advancing a step farther in the doctrine of faith, and, besides the necessity of it in order to justification, shewing its happy effect as a principle of holiness] but they that are after the Spirit, [in the Spirit's dispensation of grace, through faith, and say that Jesus is the Lord by the holy Ghost, by whom only they can say it, mind] the things of the Spirit. [Now possessing and ruling them.]

6 For to be carnally minded, [without faith in Christ for peace with God, and inward renovation, as being without the Spirit, the sole worker of both] is death; but to be spiritually minded, [enlightened, quickened, and guided by the Spirit] is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind [not gross carnality only, of which there can be no doubt; but man in his natural, fallen state, working for life of, and from himself, without any other light, direction or assistance, than that of his own reason] is enmity against God [as appears more especially when the spirituality of the law, and death for every sin, is opened to it] for it is not subject to the law of God, [rightly understood] neither indeed can be. [Being as weak as it is corrupt.]

8 So then they that are in the flesh, [on the foundation of nature only, not accepting grace, nor taking refuge in Christ, but trusting in themselves] cannot please God. [Because without faith it is impossible to please him; certainly, not by works, if they have them not.]

9 But ye are not in the flesh, [either denying the purity of the law, or the corruption and weakness of nature, or the guilt of sin, or looking for help in yourselves] but in the Spirit, [discovering to you the truth of your condition, and the sole remedy of it] if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. [As he must for your illumination and quickening.] Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, [it was said before, the Spirit of God ; therefore Christ is God] he is none of his. [Neither united to him by faith, nor influenced by his love, nor living by his rule.]

From the doctrine hitherto advanced by the Apostle, of redemption from the curse of the Fall, discharge from personal guilt, righteousness and life by Jesus Christ, and perfect restoration to the favour of God, it might be imagined that believers are now at least in as good a condition as *Adam* was in his state of innocence, and in virtue of their union with Christ, and participation of his life, exempt from the necessity of dying. In the two following verses therefore he obviates the mistake of supposing that death is abolished in this sense ; and takes occasion from thence to reveal another benefit, and happy consequence  
of

of the Spirit's taking possession of us, *viz.* his office and agency in our resurrection.

10 And if Christ be in you, [by his Spirit, with his life, grace, and power, as your freedom from condemnation. O that IF!] the body is dead [mortal, or subject to the law of death] because of sin; [which brought death into the world, and is so far, or with respect to temporal death, irreverfible in its fentence] but the Spirit [of God and of Christ] is life, because of righteousness. [Now communicated to the human nature with Christ, in whom alone it is to be found, as a means or principle of deliverance from the fpiritual death of the foul, and in confequence of it from the death of the body in its refurrection.]

11 But if the Spirit of him that raifed up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raifed up Jesus from the dead, will alfo quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

But will not all, whether in Christ, or not, be raifed from the dead? Yes; but with this difference, that the wicked will be raifed by the

sole power of God, to receive their doom ; the just, by his Spirit incorporated into them as a seed of life, and who will be the same quickening Spirit to them that he was to Christ. This is merely a point of Revelation ; and, as an important one, is largely illustrated, 1 Cor. xv.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, [the state we are in by nature, and which has been declared to be a state of corruption, guilt, and impotence] to live after the flesh. [Either to expect life from its best efforts, in its highest condition of improvement, or to obey it in the lusts thereof.]

13 For if ye live after the flesh, [out of the covenant of grace, without Christ, and holiness from a root of faith] ye shall die ; [eternally ; flesh, with its weakness, and all its guilt, original and actual, is your nature and character, and nothing that you are or do in such a state will be your restoration to life] but if ye through the Spirit [regenerate, and grafted into Christ by him] do mortify the deeds of the body, [as you must and can] ye shall live. [Be born again to an endless life, being the children of God by adoption, and similitude of nature.]



14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, [to the acknowledgement, belief, and love of Christ] they [and they only] are the sons of God. [And as such, partakers of his life and nature, and intitled to the blessings of his children.]

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; [now working for life, in your own strength, under a perpetual dread, and slavish tormenting fear of coming short of it, as all both Jews and Gentiles did, and we must for ever have done, without Christ and his salvation] but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, [the right, and with it the disposition of affectionately obedient children] whereby we cry, Abba, Father. [Glorious privilege! happy change in our condition! and blessed art thou, O Reader, if the Spirit of God speaking by St Paul has established thee in this belief, and made it glad tidings to thy heart. For]

16 The Spirit itself [in, and by the word, then preached, now written, of righteousness unto life by Jesus Christ] beareth witness with our spirit, [receiving that word;

it being his office to imprint this great gospel truth on the heart and conscience, and faith, wherever it is, and not otherwise to be wrought, proving his operation, and sealing to his testimony] that we [though sinners, and notwithstanding the imperfection of our very best estate] are the children of God.

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be [that we are ordained to] suffer with him, [and whatever our lot is in this world, enduring it willingly for his sake] that we may [and trusting that we shall] be glorified together.

It may be expected that I should say something in vindication of the sense of this part of the chapter here presented, as it is not agreeable to the common acceptance of it, and will probably be censured. The general opinion of interpreters is, that the Apostle is now guarding his notion of salvation by faith against abuse, and excluding all claim to it without holiness and purity of life, by the operation of the Spirit. It is allowed that in part he is, according to his usual method in this Epistle; in which he never loses sight of the  
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interest of holiness, knowing that his doctrine would be represented as injurious to it, and therefore as he goes along with his argument taking all possible care not to be misunderstood in this respect. I hope I shall not, as having any design to depreciate Christian obedience, or weaken the obligation to the utmost spirituality of it. But nevertheless, it seems to me that he is still prosecuting his main design, and asserting the necessity of salvation by the righteousness of faith, called the Spirit, in opposition to all self-justifying schemes, merit of works, attainments, or obedience of man, in his highest state of perfection, called the flesh : and both so called on the authority of Christ, who says, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*, John iii. 6. excluding the flesh, nature or will of man, from any share in the new birth, as altogether insufficient for this end ; and explaining it by being *born again of water and of the Spirit*, or being received into the kingdom of heaven, into a new state of favour and acceptance with God, as his children, by the one baptism of the Spirit for the remission of sins. It will be replied, that Christ does not there speak chiefly of washing from the guilt and defilement of sin in baptism, nor make the new birth to consist so much in the act of God's grace and mercy therein signified to us, as our inward cleansing, and re-  
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novation to holiness, by the power of the Spirit ; whose office it is to work this great change in the soul, to restore it to life, and qualify it to enter into the kingdom of heaven, by making it pure in itself. But let what follows in that chapter be considered, and especially what is repeatedly said of God's giving his only-begotten Son to be believed in for everlasting life ; and it will appear that the being born again of the Spirit, is to be understood of deliverance from a state of condemnation, rather than corruption. Let the sense in which St *Paul* generally uses the words flesh and spirit be compared with the words of Christ, and they will mutually illustrate each other, and justify, if not enforce the interpretation here given, *viz.* that by *the Spirit*, in the former part of this chapter, *walking after the Spirit, having the Spirit of God and of Christ, living after the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, the witnessing of the Spirit*, is chiefly meant the Spirit's testimony to the salvation wrought by Christ, the covenant of grace, or God's righteousness ; and our reception of it by faith, in opposition to the belief of a sufficiency in man to reverse the sentence of death he is under, and restore himself to the favour of God, and the hope of eternal life, by any will, works, or endeavours of his own ; which we suppose to be here principally intended by his walking and living after the flesh. To which purpose it may be

be proper to allege two or three texts from his other Epistles.

2 Cor. iii. 17. He says, *Now the Lord is that Spirit*. He had been shewing the superior excellence of the Christian dispensation, or new covenant, above that of *Moses*. One of which, the *Law*, he calls the *killing letter*, and the *ministration of death and condemnation*; as being such in the rigour, or strict acceptation of it, denouncing death for every sin, and giving the offender up to condemnation: the other, or new covenant, he calls *the Spirit*, *the ministration of the Spirit*, *the ministration of righteousness*, and consequently of life and favour, hope towards God, and holy boldness, with a clear, unveiled sight, and enlarged prospect of the manifold blessings thereby derived to us. And then he says, *the Lord* (Christ) *is that Spirit*, not the third person of the Trinity, but that which the Spirit ministers to us, *viz.* the great blessing of freedom from condemnation, of life and salvation by Jesus Christ.

In this view of Christ, as the author, worker, and finisher of life for mankind, lying under a sentence of death, utterly disabled, and always sinful, methinks I see a surpassing glory, rest for the conscience, and full security against all our fears; which is greatly diminished, if not quite mistaken by those who make our own holiness,

as wrought by the Spirit, the ministration of righteousness unto life, and his principal, if not sole office in the christian dispensation. Whereas the opposition between letter and Spirit, the ministration of death and condemnation, and the ministration of righteousness, is not founded in any man's difference from his former self, attainments however effected, abilities however conferred or improved; but in the offer of Christ, and restoration to life by him, to be received as a gift, and gloried in as grace; in opposition to any other method of salvation, or claim of acceptance on account of works done by us in obedience to law, which can never be called God's righteousness, so long as they are imperfect; and therefore must be relinquished in that sense, and give way to a better hope. I say again, the mercy of God in his covenant of grace by Jesus Christ; called *the Spirit*, because he was the Spirit of holiness in Christ, and as being revealed and ministered by the Spirit for the salvation of mankind, first to the Apostles, committed to writing by his inspiration, and never understood, believed, and savingly improved, but by his influence on the mind, heart, and conscience. And if the second chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians* is well considered, it will not seem strange that the *grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ*, or God's covenant of life and peace in him, should be called

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ed *the Spirit*, not only as the first discovery, but subsequent reception of it in the world, is to be ascribed to his agency. And we appeal to that portion of Scripture as a full testimony to the point in hand, that *living and walking after the Spirit*, &c. is principally to be understood of the heart's assent to Christ's righteousness, and joyful acceptance of it for salvation, as revealed and operated by the Spirit.

To the *Galatians* he writes thus, chap. iii. 3. *Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?* that is, having been grounded in the doctrine of salvation by faith, confirmed to you both by the outward gifts, and inward teaching of the Spirit, and therefore called *the Spirit*, are ye now made perfect in the flesh? that is, by legal observances, human works and attainments of whatever kind, to lay the great stress upon them, and as if the salvation of Christ was incomplete without them? The *Galatians*, through the influence of false teachers, were wavering in the point; and it is evidently the Apostle's design in the whole Epistle, and particularly in this chapter, to bring them back to the pure Gospel he had planted among them, of salvation *by the hearing of faith*, to be received upon his testimony and preaching, as the gift of God, wrought solely by Christ, and not in whole, or in part, by any efforts, or will  
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of the flesh : certainly, not as taken in the gross sense of the word, for the corrupt workings of flesh ; but for the nature, reason, or highest wisdom of man, working for life, in a way of its own contriving, or method of self-justification, in opposition to the declared will of God.

Again he says, chap. v. 5. *If we live in (or by) the Spirit, let us also walk in (or by) the Spirit.* It is evident that by *living* in the Spirit, and *walking* in the Spirit, must be meant two different things. For else the Apostle could not have made one a ground of exhortation to the other. But it is an excellent, and most prevailing reason for a holy, spiritual walk, if we suppose him to say in the former part of the verse, that *by the Spirit, working faith, we are made alive unto God in a covenant of redemption.* Phil. iii. 3. *For we are the (true) circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, (working faith) and rejoice in Christ Jesus, [by whom alone, and in the joy of his salvation, we can worship God in spirit and in truth] and have no confidence in the flesh ; [who has, in the gross sense of the word? Flesh therefore is man, however working, how specious soever his attainments may be, without the Spirit, and consequently without Christ.]*

Many more passages might be produced in confirmation of the notion here advanced. I would only add, that as the Gospel, with its glad tidings



tidings of peace and salvation by Jesus Christ, is called *the ministration of the Spirit*, so it appears from thence to be the principal part of his office to testify of Christ, as *the Lord our righteousness*; and that when St Paul prays for the *Ephesians*, and in them for all others, *to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*; he explains his meaning to be, that *Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith*, and that *being rooted and grounded in love* [I suppose, the love of God to mankind] *they might be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God*, Eph. iii. 16—19.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with [not worth regarding in comparison of] the glory that shall be revealed in us. [When we shall be perfectly renewed to the image of Christ. But whether in heaven, or paradise restored, I dare not affirm. Let the Reader judge from his own knowledge of scripture. It seems to me that in what follows the Apostle is speaking of a renovation of nature in Christ's reign upon earth.]

19. For

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. [For the happy change it will undergo, when they shall appear, and be glorified as such.]

20 For the creature was made subject to [the] vanity, [of its present condition under the Fall] not willingly, [not by any natural working or tendency of its own] but by reason of [by the act and power of] him who hath subjected the same [to the curse it is now under, that is, God for the sin of Adam; but nevertheless] in hope: [and with a purpose of restoration.]

21 Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, [to which all things are now subject] into the glorious liberty of the children of God. [Be as perfect, and as free from all change and corruption, as they are.]

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now: [all the disorders, workings, and revolutions of it, are preparatory to a new and better state, and conducted as uniformly to that end by a wise Providence, as a  
child

child in the womb is to its birth, through the pains and cries of the mother. What St Paul here delivers, in agreement with the three first chapters of Genesis, concerning the earth in its present form and condition, is totally different from the notion which some, rejecting the light of scripture, entertain of it, as if it was perfect in its kind, answered the original design of God in its creation, and could not be otherwise than it is; or, as a celebrated Poet expresses it, that “ whatever “ is, is right.”]

23 And not only they, [all nature and creature, things inanimate, animate, rational, whether they know it or not, want and are working towards this change of their state] but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, [are enlightened to discern, long, and prepare for it] even we ourselves groan within ourselves [as knowing better than others how great a loss we have suffered by the Fall] waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. [To an incorruptible state]

24 For [though we have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and are brought into a state of salvation by the gospel, yet this life is not the

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time of our complete redemption, but] we are saved by [or in] hope: but hope that is seen, is not hope, [but possession and enjoyment:] for what a man seeth, [and hath in hand] why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, [as we do, and are happy in that hope] then do we with patience wait for it. [This steadfastly believed, and always kept in mind, would set us right as to the point of happiness in this world.]

26 Likewise the Spirit [of grace and supplications within us, exciting us to pray and groan for our consummation] also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: [whether present deliverance, or more patient waiting. Compare *Phil.* i. 23, 24.] but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. [More and more forcible than we can express; compare 2 *Cor.* v. 1—4. We shall know the meaning of these words, when we feel what Paul did at the writing of them.]

27 And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because

cause he maketh intercession for the saints [crying, groaning souls] according to the will of God. [Better in all respects than we can; in conformity with our own desires, but above and beyond them.]

28 And we know that all things [and sufferings most of all] work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. [The word *his* is not in the original, which runs thus, "To them who are the called according to purpose," that is, effectually; those who embrace the doctrine of Christ with suitable dispositions, are faithful to their profession, and stedfastly purpose to make their calling and election sure. Or, if the word *his* is to be understood, we may suppose the Apostle had in his thoughts God's purpose of calling the Gentiles, to which he is now going more particularly to turn his discourse. Let the Reader consider what stress is laid upon this purpose in the Epistle to the Ephesians, how closely it is interwoven with every part of this Epistle to the Romans, and how greatly, as a Gentile, he is interested in it.]

29 For whom he did foreknow, [of whatever country or religion, Gentiles as well as Jews] he did predestinate [fore-ordain] to be conformed to the image of his Son, [to be one in him, in one sonship] that he might be the first-born among many brethren. [And therefore, as brethren, of the same condition with him, and standing in the same relation to God.]

30 Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called : [if St Paul may have leave to explain himself concerning those whom he means by the predestinated, and the called, he does it very clearly and expressly, chapter iii. 29, 30. ix. 24. xv. 8—12. and in what follows to the twelfth chapter] and whom he called, them he also justified, [by that very calling, and nothing else:] and whom he justified, them he also glorified. [By making them sons, and heirs of his kingdom and glory. This is very comfortable doctrine, and sweet preaching to convinced sinners ; but would strike cold to the hearts of thousands, if it was to be understood of a particular calling and election of some persons to present justification, and future

ture glory, with an exclusion of all others. Hear how the Apostle goes on.]

31 What shall we say then to these things? [to this freedom and fulness of God's calling and election of all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles] If God be for us, who can be against us? [Here the Apostle of the Gentiles is speaking in the name and person of the Gentiles, or on the supposition of a general calling of mankind. For otherwise the question will stand thus: If God be for those only whom he hath predestinated to life by a particular decree, who can be against them? Which though it will admit of no answer, yet comes in very abruptly, and is not pertinent to the design of this Epistle, nor the point argued in it, of salvation by grace, without a title or claim of works; and which as none have a right to of themselves, so all have an equal right to it by sovereign will and appointment; whatever the Jews, supposing themselves to be always and only the covenanted people of God, might pretend to the contrary. O thou who art seeking rest and comfort with a troubled mind, put the question home to thy heart and conscience,

If God be for us, who can be against us? Take up the words; enjoy this declaration, and never be so foolish as to be against God and thyself, by refusing to receive his grace, or questioning thy title to it.]

32 He that spared not his own Son, [and has thereby given us such a pledge in hand of his favour and good will to us] but delivered him up for us all, [certainly the word, *all* was intended to be taken notice of, and is more comprehensive than some would make it] how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? [Who knows the extent of God's *all things*? Who can set bounds to the largeness of the grant! Himself is contained in it.]

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? [any who are included in his decree of election?] It is God that justifieth: [Nothing less could be sufficient to put an end to our unbelieving fears; and if this does not, nothing else will. Oh! how happy might we be, if we would but read on, and say boldly in the name of God]

34 Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ [not a man like ourselves, not the highest



highest angel, but the eternal Son of God, Christ] that died, [to pay the debt of sin and sinners] yea, rather, that is risen again, [and all his members with him; thereby demonstrating that his payment to justice on our behalf was accepted, and our debt discharged;] who is even at the right hand of God, [in the fulness of power, in our nature, in possession of the glory he has purchased for us] who also maketh intercession for us. [Pleadeth at the throne of grace his sacrifice, his obedience, our faith, against all our guilt and imperfection.]

35 Who [and what] shall separate us from the love of Christ? [so gloriously displayed, so freely bestowed on us, so fully assured to us?] Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? [These are all tokens of his love, ordained for our purification, and what we chearfully undergo in his service.]

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. [And willing to be so accounted, and to suffer all things daily, even to the loss of life, for Christ's sake.]

37 Nay, in all these things [which have been now mentioned] we are [not only conquerors, but] more than conquerors, [yet not in ourselves, for in this respect, we are *without strength*, see *Rom.* v. 6. and can *do* or *think* nothing, see *John* xv. 5. and *2 Cor.* iii. 5. but] through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death, [with all its terrors] nor life, [with all its advantages] nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, [visible, or invisible] nor things present, nor things to come, [nothing that we do, or shall suffer,]

39 Nor [the greatest] height [of worldly honour, or prosperity, if we could be advanced to it] nor [the lowest] depth [of adversity we can fall into] nor any other [thing in nature, or] creature, shall be able to separate us from [or deprive us of our portion in] the love of God which is [manifested to us] in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The point which the Apostle is supposed to have had in his thoughts at the conclusion of this chapter, and is now going more fully to open, is the universality of redemption by Christ, as extending to the Gentiles; in opposition to a pre-  
vailing

vailing opinion of the Jews, that the covenant of the Messiah belonged solely to them, and that the rest of mankind were not intitled to the benefit of it. How general, and deep-rooted this prejudice was, can hardly be conceived; but appears evidently from hence, that when the door of faith was to be opened to the Gentiles in the person of *Cornelius*, *St Peter*, who was appointed to the office, stood in need of a thrice-repeated vision, and an express command, to remove his scruples, and convince him of the lawfulness of undertaking it. That therefore the Gentiles were to be partakers of the same privileges with the Jews, there was great occasion to assert and establish. And accordingly, it is one of the two capital points of doctrine laid down in this Epistle, and brought to view in every part of it, as strictly connected with, and necessarily arising from the other, of salvation by grace, through faith; which none could pretend an exclusive right to, as it was equally undeserved by all, and the free gift of God to all in the same state of condemnation. This *mystery*, as *St Paul* calls it, is largely illustrated in his Epistle to the *Ephe-sians*; where he speaks of it in such a strain of devout admiration, and rapturous thanksgiving to God for his eternal purpose of calling the Gentiles, as shews how strongly it dwelt upon his mind, and how necessary it was to insist upon  
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it at the first preaching of the Gospel; both to silence the narrow-spirited Jews, tenacious of their claim to be the only people of God, and to give the Gentiles all possible assurance of their interest in the common salvation. It is presumed, that there are no expressions in other parts of this Epistle, and especially in the following chapter, but what may well be understood consistently with the notion of a general calling of Jews and Gentiles, and therefore not necessarily enforcing the doctrine of a particular personal election; which as it is repugnant to our natural notions of the Deity, uncomfortable in itself, and very hard of digestion, so every attempt to reconcile the passages seemingly tending to it with the general tenor, and express declarations of scripture, pleads its own excuse. I do not mean that the scripture is to be interpreted by our notions of God, and if it was clear and express in the point, should not hesitate a moment to submit to its authority. But it appears to me that the offer of salvation is as extensive as it is free; and that the Apostle is so far from putting a bar in the way of any, that in the application he is going to make to the Jews, and the design of his reasoning with them upon the subject expressly pointed out, he has guarded as fully as words can do against any such interpretation of his meaning. Let him now be heard for himself.

## C H A P. IX.

1 **I** Say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the holy Ghost,

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. [What for? Because God had not predestinated more of the Jews, or all of them, to salvation? This he could not have said, or thought, without the greatest impiety, if there was an overruling will, or decree of God in the case; for then he would have known it to be his duty to acquiesce in it. But the general blindness, and obstinacy of his nation, in rejecting the offer of grace and mercy by Christ, supposing it to be avoidable, was a heart-breaking consideration to him, and he might well express his concern for their wilful unbelief, and the fatal consequences of it, in the manner he does.]

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, [devoted to death by Christ; or made a sacrifice, as He was. This was saying a great deal; and it can hardly

hardly be supposed that by being accursed from Christ, he meant eternally damned] for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh :

4 Who are Israelites ; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, [the glory of adoption] and the covenants, [of whatever kind, whenever granted, however renewed] and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ;

5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, [The Apostle willingly enumerates all the privileges of the Jews, but could not allow, either that a right to appropriate the blessings of Christ to themselves, or that an unalienable, hereditary right in him, was one of them] who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. [Let it be observed, that Christ is here said to be over all, God blessed for ever, and the assertion confirmed with an Amen, as an undoubted truth. One such affirmation of Christ's divinity from an inspired Apostle, is sufficient to fix the sense of all other seemingly dubious, or controverted passages.]

6 Not as though the word [and promise] of God hath taken none effect. [As it was

designed to do, and certainly will, with regard to all who come within the intention of it, all true-hearted Israelites, though not all who bear the name ;] for they are not all Israel, [beloved of God] which are of Israel : [by natural descent.]

7 Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: [and heirs of the blessing of Abraham] but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. [Then it should seem, that at least all the descendents of Isaac were the seed. No, nor that neither, as the Apostle will shew. The promise was always with a limitation, not to all the posterity either of Abraham or Isaac, nor to any of them only, but to the heirs of their faith.]

8 That is, they which are the children of the flesh, [all the natural descendents, as such] these are not the children of God : [in a covenant of life] but the children of the promise [Isaac's line then, by the sovereign will of God, the Gentiles now, by the same good pleasure ; the parallel running betwixt them two, considered in general, as received into a state of adoption. Not that

that the promise was made absolutely to all, or any of either sort, but only those at all times who come within the conditions of it] are accounted for the seed.

9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

10 And not this only, but when Rebecca had conceived by [that] one, [in whom the promise was vested] even by our father Isaac,

11 For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election [not of Jacob absolutely to eternal salvation, but that his will, or eternal purpose to save any] might stand, [take effect, and be acknowledged to be not of works, but of him that calleth; [by his free grace, to the acceptance of mercy, according to the doctrine so clearly delivered in this Epistle.]

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. [The posterity of the elder, the posterity of the younger, in which sense only it was true.]

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I [comparatively] hated.  
[That



{That is, say some, with an appearance of probability, in respect of worldly advantages, and particularly that the words, "The elder shall serve the younger," so limit the Apostle's meaning.

But if it should be allowed that he is here asserting and maintaining a right in God to dispense his favours of whatever kind as he pleases, still his reasoning on the point is only to shew that as God gave *Isaac* to *Abraham* by promise, and in the settlement of his blessings preferred *Jacob*, chiefly considered in his posterity, to *Esau*; so he might by an act of the same sovereignty, which the Jews especially had no reason to find fault with, put the rest of mankind in a capacity of being saved, by receiving them in a body into his covenant of grace. It does not yet appear that the Apostle had any thing farther in view than such a general calling of the Gentiles to a state of salvation, or that his argument, taken in connection with the scope of the Epistle, led him to speak at all of an election of particular persons, either amongst Jews or Gentiles.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? [thus dispensing his favours of providence, or grace, to the  
Jews

Jews in their first fathers, to the Gentiles now] God forbid. [It is true, the Gentiles are not here mentioned by name; but they are in the winding up of the argument, at verse 24, &c. which shews that it has all along a reference to their case, and is the clue to guide us through this difficult chapter.]

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. [These words sent the gospel hither.]

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. [Which all want, and is freely offered to men of all nations. A most comfortable declaration for mankind sinners, all whose endeavours, willing, and running, are far short of what is required.]

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, [preserved thee in being, or respited thy destruction, notwithstanding repeated provocations:] that I might shew my power in thee; [by means of thy hardness, and obstinacy

nacy in unbelief] and that my name might be declared throughout all nations. [On occasion of the signal deliverance of my people.]

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, [as on the Jews before, so on the Gentiles now, to make them his people] and whom he will he hardeneth. [Leaves those to their own hardness and impenitence, who stand out against all the means of conviction, and will not be reclaimed, but are even more hardened by the offer of mercy. Compare this with *ver.* 22—24, which confirm the sense here given.]

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, [in sullen discontent] Why doth he yet find fault? [or bring a charge of guilt against any for being as they are] for who hath resisted his will? [If it is his pleasure to give up some to a hardened state, which was, and is to this day the case of the Jews, and offer to others the means of grace and salvation, who can pretend to oppose him, or controul his will?]

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed

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say

say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? [On the supposition of an eternal decree in favour of some, with an exclusion of others, this is hardly a sufficient answer to the question asked, *ver.* 19. If he is disputing with the Jews, cavilling against God for rejecting them when they had rejected his Christ, and offering that mercy to the Gentiles which they refused, all is clear. For]

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, [intending to do it in his own time] and to make his power known, [for a terror to all obstinate sinners] endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: [if it should be asked, How fitted? whether devoted to it by the will of God, or fitted for it by their own impenitence? I suppose, the latter, and that they might have repented and obtained mercy; which is sufficiently implied in the notion of long-suffering, and also declared to be the end of it by *St Paul*, ch. ii. 4, 5. and by *St Peter*, 2 Epist. iii. 15.]

23 And [as God endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, in order to their amendment] that he might [farther] make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, [so called, because saved only by mercy] which he had afore prepared unto glory? [the glory of adoption by faith in Christ Jesus.]

24 Even us whom he hath called, [to a state of salvation, not according to works which we have done, but by a righteousness of his appointing and giving] not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. [That is, all of both sorts, who come in upon the call of God.]

This, with what follows to the end of the chapter, and in the two next, we now appeal to as the test of the exposition here given, and as it were the finger pointing to it. If it is asked, Of whom speaketh the Apostle? Of a select number ordained by the sovereign will of God to salvation, with an exclusion of all others; or of his taking the Gentiles to be his people under Christ, with a present rejection of the main body of the Jews? It must be owned that some expressions are so strong in favour of the former opinion, that

it is no wonder so many volumes have been written in defence of it. But if his design was to plead for the admission of the Gentiles into covenant with God, as it seems to be by the application he makes of his reasoning to them by name, at the conclusion of his argument; then it is allowable, and even necessary, to interpret all the expressions he makes use of in the way to that conclusion, consistently with his avowed design; which on this supposition has no respect to a predestination, or election of particular persons, with a bar to all the rest of mankind. It is not my intention to wade farther into this depth. What I have offered is the real sense of my own mind, founded on the nature, and express purpose of the Apostle's argument, and clearly pointed out by himself, which was to vindicate the divine providence in calling the Gentiles to be partakers of the Gospel, and refute the vain pretensions of the Jews to an exclusive right in the favour of God, and the promise of the Messiah. They, it seems, were strict Predestinarians; and it can hardly be supposed that the Apostle in arguing the point with them combats their error by establishing it upon the whole, as he certainly does if he is here pleading the cause of Predestination; only with this difference, that whereas they confined it to their own nation, he admits of the nation

tion only with respect to a small number of them, and at the same time extends it to some others, comparatively few, amongst the Gentiles. It must be confessed that many of the defenders of this doctrine have been ornaments to the christian profession. The ground on which others form their dissent, *viz.* the single point which the Apostle had in view, and on which alone he must be supposed to argue throughout the chapter, is before the Reader; and perhaps he will be enabled to extricate himself from the difficulties he may be under on this head by a due consideration of what follows.

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, [in a covenant relation, as the nation of the Jews was] which were not my people; [the body of the Gentiles] and her beloved, [espoused as a wife to Christ] which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; [but aliens from the commonwealth of Israel;] there shall they be called the children of the living God. Made nigh by the blood of Christ, Eph. ii. 12, 13.]

And as concerning the Jews, that the generality of them should be cast off, this was also foretold as well as the calling of the Gentiles. For,

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children be as the sand of the sea, a remnant [only] shall be saved. [Notwithstanding their being the covenanted people of God.]

28 For he will finish the work [of their destruction] and cut it short in righteousness, [or justice] because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. [In the land of Judah.]

It may here be asked, whether the expressions of a *remnant* being saved, and the Lord's making a *short work*, are to be extended to the Jews of all ages, or only to those of that time, and since, for their disowning Christ? The Predestinarian must say the former; but if the latter, as it should seem, they have no relation to a particular election, and the reason why any of them were rejected, is not to be sought for in the decree of God, but their own unbelief.

29 And as Esaias said before, [in a former chapter] Except the Lord of sabaoth had left  
us



as a seed, [to spring up in some future time] we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah. [By a total and perpetual excision.]

30 What shall we say then? [even this] that the Gentiles [mark it well, the Gentiles] which followed not after righteousness, [according to a rule given them, as the Jews had; those who had no knowledge of their want of a perfect righteousness, and therefore sought it not] have attained to [a full, justifying] righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, [their law, a perfect rule in itself, in order to justification] hath not attained to the [true] law of righteousness. [The justification they looked for.]

32 Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, [which sees it only in Christ] but as it were [or according to the Greek, altogether] by the works of the law : [where it never will be found]—

Reader, this is a weighty matter. If thou art seeking righteousness by the works of the law,

professing faith in Christ, and in the main trusting in thyself for acceptance with God, be warned of thy danger. Thou art at the same point with God, and in the same pride of unbelief, which proved fatal to the Jews.

— For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone ; [Christ, the Lord our righteousness, as too many always do.]

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence ; and whosoever believeth on him, [for all he wants, life and righteousness] shall not be ashamed. [As every man has cause to be, and certainly will before God, without him.]

## C H A P. X.

1 **B**Rethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. [Whom does he mean by Israel, but the Jewish nation in general ? and what by their being saved, but that they might continue to be the people of God by repenting and believing the Gospel, as it must be supposed from his prayer for them they might have done ? ]

2 For

2 For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, [and are seeking his favour] but not according to knowlege. [Of God, themselves, or the great design of their law; which was not to save them, but to convince them of their want of some other method of salvation.]

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, [how much goes to it, and in what way they are to be possessed of it] and going about to establish their own righteousness, [as fully sufficient for their salvation] have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of Christ. [Now revealed, and offered to them. Hast thou, who readest this, knowing what God's righteousness, and what thy own is? Consider whether God's righteousness does not here stand opposed to any righteousness of Self, however wrought, as the ground of our trust, something without us, far beyond any thing we can do, and only perfect, to be received wholly as a gift by faith.]

4 For Christ is the end of the law [as it had its full accomplishment only in him, prefigured him in its sacrifices and ceremonies, and by not being performed, obliged

all who were under it to look to him] for righteousness, [to be imputed] to every one that believeth. [Some say, for a righteousness of their own, to be acquired by believing in him for help. But St Paul, if his words have any meaning, affirms that this will never do. It is left to every man's choice, which he will trust to.]

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth these things [every thing perfectly, in the full sense and meaning of it] shall live by them. [And not else. Failure is death; and sincerity, if it could be pleaded, is not doing, nor any answer to the strictness of the law.]

6 But the righteousness which is of [and comes to man by] faith, [and not by works, which we have not] speaketh on this wise, [he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Now, O Lord Jesus, speak thy own truth for life to every soul] Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ [in whom alone is the righteousness it wants] down from above.

7 Or

7 Or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring Christ again from the dead. [Meaning, that we are not put upon any such impossible attempts to come at the righteousness we want; or as if Christ had not already done all that was necessary, both descended from above, and rose again from the dead, to complete the work of our salvation.]

8 But what faith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, [put into it by God himself] and in thy heart: [to be received there:] that is, the word of faith, which we preach, [and all should preach, for hope and comfort, to the glory of the giver,]

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, [thereby declaring his acceptance of all he did and suffered, and of all believers in him] thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. [So then saving righteousness is not in ourselves, as we should naturally

naturally have imagined ; but is God's righteousness in Christ, appointed to us for salvation, and effectual to it by our belief and confession of the truth.]

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed. [But approved, accepted ; none but by believing, and all who do believe.]

12 For [whatever the Jews pretend] there is no difference [made, in God's offer of grace] between the Jew and [the rest of mankind, comprehended under the word] the Greek : for the same Lord over all, is rich [in mercy] unto all that call upon him [for it.]

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, [in the way of his prescribing, and in the faith of Jesus Christ] shall be saved.

And if God designed that his mercy should be universal, certainly it was necessary that it should be universally published. The Apostle therefore puts these questions to the Jews, still dissatisfied in the case.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall

shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach except they be sent? [In which prophecy of Scripture it is evidently implied that they should] as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace [to a condemned world] and bring glad tidings of good things! [The best of all good things, remission of sins, and the hope of eternal life, laid deep in the mercy of God, and the merits of Christ.]

16 But [alas!] they have not all obeyed the gospel. [And if it should be objected to the universality of redemption, either that it has not been offered, or not taken effect, according to the design of it; let it be remembered that this also was expressly foretold] for Esaus faith, Lord, who [almost] hath believed our report?

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, [the will of God for the salvation of mankind declared;] and hearing by the word of God. [Appointing his messengers to declare and testify it.]

18 But

18 But I say, Have they [the nations] not heard? Yes verily, [they have; inſomuch that to this may be applied what David ſays of the univerſal preaching of the heavenly bodies] Their ſound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

19 But I ſay, Did not Iſrael know? [the conſequence of their unbelief, and the calling of the Gentiles? They might have known both from their own ſcriptures, for] firſt, Moſes ſaith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a fooliſh nation [as the Gentiles were accounted by the Jews] I will anger you.

20 But Eſaias is very bold, and ſaith, I was found of them that ſought me not; I was made manifeſt unto them that asked not after me.

21 But to Iſrael he ſaith, All day long I have ſtretched forth my hands unto a diſobedient and gainſaying people.

The two points which it has been obſerved the Apoſtle had in view, and labours with ſo much zeal to eſtabliſh, of a ſaving righteouſneſs to be received by faith, and the extenſion of it to the Gentiles, appear remarkably in this chapter. That  
we



we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ : that man in his fallen state has not a power of reconciling himself to God, and that his acceptance to favour does not depend upon himself, or what the Apostle calls *his own willing and running* ; are doctrines which we should never have thought of without a divine revelation ; and which, now they are revealed, enter slowly into the mind, and meet with great opposition from the notions we have naturally of God and ourselves. But nevertheless, they are some of the distinguishing peculiarities of the christian religion ; whose excellency and great design it is to give relief to our guilty consciences, and free us from the fear of condemnation, by bringing us the *glad tidings* of satisfaction made to justice, and a rich display of the divine mercy in the person of Christ ; and stripping it of this prerogative, is as it were tearing out the heart of it, and degrading it nearly to a level with the systems of human Philosophy, or the religion of *Mahomet*. We are far from supposing that the Gospel does not furnish us with a more excellent rule of morality, carry it to a greater height of perfection, and enforce it upon better grounds, than it ever was, or could be, by the light of nature ; yet that very purity is made an objection by some against the truth, and whole system of christianity, as requiring what  
is

is impossible to man, and making our condition worse than it was before, by the very great spirituality and strictness of its precepts. The necessity of them, both to convince us of sin, and as a rule of duty to believers, is acknowledged, and the christian advantages we enjoy of better instruction in all respects than the Heathens had, demand our utmost thankfulness. But if our salvation turns upon the strict performance of strict commands, and absolute conformity to them, as it must without Christ's peace, and Christ's righteousness, we shall have insurmountable difficulties to struggle with, and be given up to a tormenting state of fear and uncertainty under a sense of guilt, or which is all one, the imperfection of our obedience.

And it may now be observed, on occasion of this chapter particularly, that a case can hardly be imagined more full in point, and more proper to bring the dispute to an issue, than that of the Jews, with whom *St Paul* is here arguing. In opposition to the righteousness of God, existing nowhere but in the person of Christ, and offered to their belief and acceptance, they were bent upon establishing their own for salvation; and it must be owned they had great advantages for the attainment of a personal holiness above the rest of mankind. If therefore they came short of the perfection of it, it was neither for want of a right  
knowledge

knowledge of God, nor a perfect rule, nor sincerity of endeavour in some, but because the thing is impossible in itself. Their mistake was fatal; for to that the Apostle ascribes their being rejected of God. As they would not be debtors to him for a righteousness which they did not think they wanted, nor understand how that of another could be necessary, or available to their salvation, they generally disinherited themselves by their own act, and by ceasing to be the people of God, made way for the reception of the Gentiles to the privileges they had forfeited. Which mystery of divine providence is the subject of the next chapter.

## C H A P. XI.

1 **I** Say then, hath God cast away his people? [the Jews, all of them, and for ever] God forbid. For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. [He was not, and others needed not to have been cast away. This is very properly alleged as a proof that the nation of the Jews was not cast off by an unalterable decree, but is nothing to the purpose on the supposition of a personal election; for then both he and they might have been excluded

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from

from mercy, notwithstanding their being Israelites.]

2 God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew. [And ordained to be his people in the way of his appointing, in which any can be so.] Wot ye [know ye] not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, [representeth their apostatized condition at that time in his prayer to God] saying,

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? [why, that the defection to Idolatry was not universal, as he imagined; for] I have reserved to myself [there are yet left, well known to me, and preserved by me] seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

5 Even so at this present time also there is [not an entire falling away of the Jews in unbelief, nor consequently a total rejection of them, but] a remnant [who will be saved] according to the election of grace. [Manifestly so called, as being an election of those  
and

and those only, to grace, who receive it as grace ; as the Apostle argues in the next verse, repeating and inculcating the great doctrine laid down in this Epistle, of which he never loses sight.]

6 And if by grace, [as mercy, and a free gift] then it is no more of works : as a debt, and deserved wages] otherwise grace is no more grace. [And God makes us debtors to him for the mercy we do not want ;] but if it be of works, [either in whole or in part] then it is no more of grace : [wholly, as the word implies ; but partly of grace, and partly of works] otherwise work is no more work. [Worthy of reward for its own sake, and which God will not deny to any who can make good their claim to it.]

7 What then ? Israel [it is true] hath not obtained that which he seeketh for ; [a justifying righteousness, because they sought it in themselves] but the election [that part of them who sought it according to the mind and will of God, and therefore chosen and approved] hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. [By the just judgment of God.]

8 According as it is written, [of the Jews in former times, and remarkably fulfilled in them at this present time] God hath given them [by suffering them to continue in their undiscerning, obdurate state] the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day.

9 And David saith, Let their table be made [or, it, their altar, on which they feasted with God, and on which, with its sacrifices, they resolved to depend, shall be made] a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompence unto them.

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, [because they would not] and bow down their back alway.

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? [If they had been ordained to both, the Apostle would not have said as he does] God forbid: [no, by no means] but rather [that the mercy of God might take effect, and Christ still have a people in the world,] through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. [That they might see their *m*istake and danger, and rise again.]

12 Now,

12 Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, [in the knowlege of salvation] and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles: [according to the design of a gracious providence in their call and recovery to God] how much more their fulness? [At some time, still future; when the conversion of the Jews shall be attended with a more signal and general conversion of the Gentiles than ever has been yet.]

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, [on occasion of the rich mercy now vouchsafed, and hereafter to be more abundantly manifested towards you.] Inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office. [In asserting and vindicating their right and calling to the present and future privileges of the Gospel.]

14 If by any means I may provoke to [a holy] emulation them which are my flesh, [dear to me, as my own nation and kindred] and might save some of them. [For they are none of them excluded from salvation by a perpetual, irrevocable decree, and will hereafter be generally brought home to Christ.]

15 For if the casting away of them [for their unbelief] be the receiving of the world; [to the grace which they refuse] what shall the receiving of them [to their first covenant-state] be, but life from the dead? [To them, and to the Gentiles, by the coming in of their fulness, as at *ver.* 25.]

And that they shall be so received, is evident from the design of the first-fruits under the law being consecrated to, and accepted by God, which was to sanctify and derive a blessing to the whole.

16 For if the first-fruit be holy, [in the blessing of Abraham] the lump [or body of the Jews] is also holy: [by an unalterable, divine appointment, though now for a time cast off] and if the root be holy, so are the branches. [As partaking of its nature.]

17 And if [by the just judgment of God upon them, and his favour shewed to thee, O Gentile, it is so ordered that] some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree;

18 Boast



18 Boast not against the branches: but if thou boast, [know that] thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest [only] by faith. Be not high-minded, [on account of thy present advantage over them] but fear. [Be humble, keep thy faith, and remember that thou art saved only by mercy.]

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

22 Behold therefore the goodness, and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; [in consequence of their fall, and because they fell, and not because they were preordained to it, which would have been severity indeed] but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in [the steady belief of] his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, [as it is necessarily implied in the words they needed not to have done] shall

be grafted in : for God is able to graft them in again. [Notwithstanding any seeming impossibilities.]

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree ; how much more shall those which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree ?

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, [for a time, and to part, much the greatest part of Israel] until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. [Either until the time allotted to the Gentiles for their reception of the Gospel shall be expired ; or, until the time of their general conversion ]

26 And so [when that time comes] all Israel shall be saved : [or brought again into a covenant-state of salvation, by their acknowledgement of Christ] as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, [the manner of which time only can discover] and

and shall turn away [the charge of] ungodliness from Jacob. [By removing their guilt.]

27 For this is my covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins. [Which can only be by their believing, the covenant being sure upon that condition.]

28 As concerning the [blessings of the] Gospel, they are enemies [at present] for your sakes: [that you might have the benefit of it:] but as touching the [peculiar] election, [of them, as being the seed of Abraham] they are [unalterably] beloved for the Fathers sakes.

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. [And will certainly be effectual to all who are the proper subjects of them, in his own time.]

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. [It seems to me that this verse should be otherwise translated, *viz.* even so have these also [the Jews] not believed your mercy, that is, God's gracious design  
of

of mercy to you Gentiles, to the end that they also might obtain mercy, in their need of it, and state of unbelief.]

32 For God hath concluded [and finds] them all in unbelief, [utterly unworthy of his salvation, when he comes to them with the offer of it; you, in your ignorance of the one true God, them in their disbelief of their want of mercy, and of your reception to it] that he might have mercy upon all. [To the praise of the glory of his grace, to the recovery of all hearts to him in love.]

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowlege of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, [decrees] and his ways past finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? [Reader, think well what thou hast to give to him, what claim of merit, or right to a reward in thyself, and it will lead thee full into the design of this Epistle.]

36 For of him, [as the giver] through him, [as the worker] and to him [as the  
end]

end] are all things : [creation, redemption, call to grace, belief of it, perseverance in it, and final consummation] to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

It is hardly to be doubted but that the diligent Reader of this Epistle will have several questions to put to himself concerning the first calling of the Jews, their present rejection, and the calling of the Gentiles, as well as the nature of the decree, by which they were severally received into covenant with God, or lost the benefit of it. That the divine decree does not relate to the election, or reprobation of particular persons, as the stated method of God's proceeding with mankind under every dispensation, but to the general calling of the Jews at one time, of the Gentiles at another, to be a sacred people to God, we have ventured to affirm is the doctrine of St *Paul*, and produced the reasons of our opinion as we were able. Farther we dare not search into this mystery ; and heartily wish that all, instead of pretending to know what God has reserved to himself, and letting their thoughts loose into a wide field of lawless conjectures, would stop where the Apostle does, and say, with an humble submission of their understandings to what is written, and profound adoration of the divine counsels—*O the depth ! But though secret things*

*things belong unto the Lord our God, yet those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, Deut. xxix. 29.* They are our portion from the Lord, Christian birthright, and the discoveries of his mercy to us in our fallen state of darkness and corruption; and we should be very much wanting to ourselves, if we did not inquire diligently into them, and embrace them thankfully as coming from heaven, and revealed to us for our present comfort, and everlasting salvation. This Epistle to the *Romans* is such a rich treasure of divine knowledge, such a full opening, and clear stating of the method of our salvation by Jesus Christ, that if we had no other light vouchsafed us, it is sufficient of itself to guide us into all truth, and settle our judgments in points of the greatest importance. I hope I shall have the Reader's indulgence for resuming once more, and concluding with the great subject of it, the righteousness of God.

How sin is expiated, how the law is fulfilled, what will be accounted to us for righteousness, what is the assurance of conscience, and the ground of our rejoicing before God, are questions which it has been already observed we never could have answered without the help of scripture. And now that the answers to them have been given with such clearness and precision by the Spirit of God, it is greatly to be lamented

mented that, instead of receiving them in simplicity, as they are delivered to us, and with humble confession of our ignorance, so much learned pains should be taken in every age to pervert the plain sense of them, and darken that grace of the Gospel, which is its glorious peculiarity, the soul's present entrance into rest, and great hope for eternity. It must be owned that a perfect righteousness to plead before God, is desirable, and the very thing we want; and therefore if it is provided and offered, it behoves us to consider well for what reasons we reject it, or acknowledge it only in part, or what we have to substitute in the room of it. I do not conclude for the necessity, or actual conveyance of such a gift, from our want of it; which would be a fallacious way of arguing, and a bold prescribing to God for the supply of our wants of every kind, whether real or imaginary. But then the want we have of it will be a great help to us in discovering on which side the truth lies, give weight to the arguments in its favour, and may justly be called in to influence our belief. And farther, supposing the righteousness of God, or of Christ, to be offered to our belief and acceptance, we conclude certainly that it is a doctrine of the utmost importance; as being the chief point on which our salvation turns, the glory and great blessing of Christ's religion, full satisfaction to  
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the mind of man labouring under a sense of guilt, and the only security against our fears of a charge of sin still standing out against us, when we have done all we can, and the very best we ever shall do. From whence also it appears what faith is, and why it has this character of excellence stamped upon it in scripture, that it is impossible to please God without it. For if Christ and his benefits, remission of sins, adoption, righteousness, victory over death, grace and glory, are freely given to us of God, they must be received as gifts; and it is as evident that they cannot be received but by being believed.

Faith therefore is the heart's assent to the declarations of the Gospel concerning the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ, in a way of mere grace and favour, to be received in penitence and humility, with an unfeigned acknowledgement of the mercy, and an utter denial of all power and sufficiency in man to help and save himself. For as the salvation of the Gospel becomes salvation to us by being believed, or received wholly as a gift by faith, it cannot be any thing wrought by us, or in us, but is solely the work of Christ. Neither is a bare reception of Christianity, and assent to the truth of it, in preference to all other religions, the faith we speak of; but the heart's establishment in that peculiar, and most essential doctrine of it, which alone makes it *glad tidings*



to a sinful world, and worthy of all acceptation, that *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*: And that *he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin*; that *we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 19, 21.

And if the necessity of such a faith should still be questioned, and the proofs of its excellence demanded, we say first, that salvation is not possible to man in any other way; unless he can plead an unfinning obedience, or cancel his guilt, satisfy justice, overcome death, and open his way into heaven, by his own repentance, or future sincerity of works; which, as being imperfect, have confessedly the nature of sin, and can neither atone for what is past, nor justify themselves. It is repeated, and cannot be too much inculcated, that the salvation of man is not to be procured by any running or willing of his own, but solely the gift of God in Christ, working our deliverance by himself, fulfilling all righteousness, dying, rising again, ascending into heaven, in the human nature, for the human nature; and therefore FAITH is the great distinction of a Christian, and has such efficacy ascribed to it in scripture, because it is our acceptance of the mercy by which alone we are saved, and gives all the glory of it where it is due.

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But let it be farther tried by the knowlege which leads to it, the disposition of heart which accompanies it, and the change it produces, wherever it is real, and it will be found to include in it all the excellence of which we are capable, and as fruitful in good effects, as it is suited to our condition, and necessary in itself. For what is the knowledge which leads to it, but a deep sense and conviction of the damnableness of all sin, as well as the reality and greatness of our own? Which I verily believe is the true reason, whatever else is pretended, of its being so generally decried; it is mortifying to our pride, lays us very low, and makes us much worse than we are willing to think ourselves. Again, what is the disposition of heart and soul which accompanies the sense of discharge from guilt, and reception to peace and favour with an offended God, but that of *the woman* (Luke vii.) *who had much forgiven her*, tears of contrition and joy, dear respect, humble adoration? And what is the natural effect of deliverance from eternal death, the acknowledged desert of sin, and restoration to life, unmerited, freely bestowed, and purchased for rebels and enemies by the unknown pains and sufferings of an incarnate God, but dread of sin, the most sincere resolutions of obedience, with the quickest sense of defect, and deep humiliation for it, pure devotion to the Saviour;

Saviour, and all the amiable and holy tempers which are the genuine fruits of love, and the warmest gratitude for the greatest mercies can inspire? So that faith in Christ, as having salvation in himself, doing what we should have done, and suffering what we should have suffered as the sole means of our redemption, Christ all in all, is not only belief and possession of the truth, of God's justice, of the strictness and purity of his law, of the curse of sin, and man's utter inability to help and restore himself; as the denial of these points is the denial of all truth: but the belief of that mercy by which we are delivered from the misery of our condition, reconciled to God, and as members of Christ made partakers of his sonship, life, and death, is in the whole process of it such a contrivance for holiness, such an awakening discovery of our guilt and danger, such a powerful call to the heart for its return to God, and so productive of an acceptable and pure obedience from a root of love, that we may challenge all the wisdom of man to substitute any thing in its room, of equal force to promote the reformation of a world dead in trespasses and sins, and recover us to a state of willing subjection to the God and Father of our spirits.

Let the mind search all its stores, let philosophy exert all its efforts, let the will be pronounced free to refuse the evil, and chuse the good, place

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virtue in the most favourable light you please, display the beauty, enforce the fitness and obligation of it by all the arguments you can think of, yet how weak are all the powers of nature and reason, when put in the balance against Christ crucified? That one saying—*If ye love me, keep my commandments*—carries more light and instruction, has more weight of argument, and greater force of persuasion in it, than all the volumes of morality that ever were written. It is almost needless to observe farther, that as holiness springs from love, and love from the cross of Christ; so before it can take place in the soul, he must be apprehended in all the fulness of his redemption, as the Saviour in his blood, as the Lord our righteousness, as our life, health, and resurrection, and title to the joys of heaven.

That we might look to him for these benefits, renounce ourselves and our own works in the matter of salvation, and glory only in the Lord, the blessed *St Paul* delivered this Epistle to the Church; well knowing that the foundation of Christian obedience can only be laid in the humility of christian faith; that ignorance of the perfection of the law, in conjunction with an arrogant self-sufficiency, is no claim to the divine acceptance; and that the heart of man can never be brought back again to God, nor find anything like an answer to that hard petition of the  
Lord's

Lord's prayer, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*, but by having his love in Christ Jesus shed abroad in it.

Here ends the argumentative, or doctrinal part of the Epistle, which is followed by exhortations to christian practice; and we heartily wish the Reader may be prepared for them by an unfeigned assent to the doctrine which has been delivered, and a lively sense of redeeming love. For on this ground the Apostle proceeds to enforce them; and they will come with great weight, and be their own comment to the heart of every believer. He now says,

## C H A P. XII.

I **I** Beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [alluding to the bodies of beasts, which were offered in sacrifice under the Jewish law, but meaning themselves wholly, their souls and bodies] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service: [reasonable as from creatures to their Creator, the giver and sustainer of their lives, and the author of all the blessings they enjoy. But unspeakably more so on ac-

count of his mercies in Jesus Christ, so clearly opened, and so fully proved in this Epistle; and which cannot be rightly believed without leading to the Apostle's inference, if he had not particularly pointed it out. Restoration from the fall! Sins forgiven! Righteousness imputed! Death abolished! every curse removed! grace reigning, and heaven opened to sinners!

Well might the Apostle say, *I beseech you by the mercies of God.* He has now gotten such an interest in the soul of every believer, by presenting to his view the joyful truths of the Gospel, and the greatness of his salvation, so far beyond all he could hope for, as must almost necessarily engage him to receive his following exhortations to holiness, and say as he himself did, when he was struck to the earth with a light from heaven, — *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Let the man once say, what should I do but for Christ? and his next question will be, what shall I do for Christ? Let but the mercy of God, the misery from which it delivers us, the happiness it restores us to, the glory it entails upon us, be always present to the mind, and lively in the heart, and the joy of the Lord will be our strength, his peace the turning of our wills to him, and great advantage

advantage for a pure and free obedience, as well as song of praise in time and eternity. It is very remarkable that the worship of heaven, as heard by St *John* in the *Apocalypse*, chap. v. turns upon this point, the Lamb slain, the crucified Saviour; and that the whole company of glorified spirits is represented as pierced through and through with the sense of God's love to mankind in Christ, swallowed up in the contemplation of it, and perpetually approaching the throne with their solemn homage and adoration for the wonder of redeeming mercy. What should be the employment of our thoughts and meditations on earth, the great object of our belief, supreme delight, and the ground of all our praises, but that which tunes the voices of saints and angels, and keeps the holy fire of love burning in them for ever and ever!

It is the Author's prayer for himself, and for all who call on the Father in the name and faith of his only begotten Son, that being united to this happy society in knowlege, love, and purity here, we may partake of their joys, and be made perfect with them in heaven; through him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, JESUS CHRIST the RIGHTEOUS. *Amen.*







A

S E R M O N

Tending to Illustrate

The Doctrine of the EPISTLE of

ST PAUL to the ROMANS.





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S E R M O N  
O N

I COR. XV. 56, 57.

*The sting of death is sin ; and the strength  
of sin is the law.*

*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the  
victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**N**OTHING can be more distressing to  
the soul than the apprehension of  
God's displeasure, and the fear of being  
given up to it without remedy, after death.  
And if God is just, and man is sinful, there  
is

is but too much ground for that fear ; every one's conscience must be haunted with it more or less, and relief from it will be desirable and welcome, in proportion to the burden we feel, and the judgment we dread. It is therefore a delightful employment to those who are awakened to a sense of their condition in sin, and seeking after deliverance from it, to search the scripture, in order to know as exactly as possible by what means, and in what way, they are restored to the favour of God, and the hope of eternal life. And when the eyes of their understanding are enlightened to see the salvation therein revealed ; the fulness and excellence of it, how great it is in itself, and how suitable to the wants of perishing sinners, they receive it thankfully at the hands of God, endeavour to understand it more and more ; esteem it as their best portion upon earth, and desire nothing so much as to live and die in the comfort of it. There is a sweetness in the knowledge of Christ crucified, which they can find in nothing else ; and when they observe what a solid foundation there is for all their hopes in him, what  
rich

rich mercy is offered them, how plainly it is declared, how often repeated, and how earnestly they are invited to accept of it, it takes possession of their hearts, and fills their minds with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Of the many passages of scripture, which discover to us the desperateness of our condition, and the necessity of deliverance from it, with the manner in which it was wrought for us, and is conveyed to us, we have one now before us in the words of the text ; and if it pleases God to give a blessing to what I have to say upon it, and open it to your hearts, you will perceive that there is a rich treasure of saving knowlege in it, and all the instruction you can desire, if there was not another such in the whole Bible. And I mention this to obviate an excuse which you are apt to take up, as a cover for your ignorance, and to the great prejudice of your souls, that, considering your station in the world, and want of time or learning, it cannot be expected that you should know much, and that you may hope well of your state, though you live and die in the darkness of unbelief.

unbelief. I say, here is a full answer to all such vain pretences ; and if you would but ask yourselves the meaning of what St *Paul* has delivered to us in these few words, if you would think of them with seriousness and godly concern, and especially if you would beg of God to explain them to you, they would give you such information in points of the greatest concernment to your present peace, and everlasting welfare, as you would have cause to bless God for all the days of your lives. I do not mean that we should look no farther, or sit down contented with the knowlege of one or two portions of scripture. For it was all *given by inspiration of God, to make us wise unto salvation* ; and, as I said before, it is the delight of all who are in earnest with God and their souls, to search and study it for this end ; to treasure it up in their minds, to make it the subject of their prayers, and the cordial of their hearts ; to observe how one part of it confirms or explains another, and how the whole of it is drawn to the single point of the redemption and recovery of lost mankind by the free grace of God in Jesus Christ. But nevertheless,

theless, it is of singular benefit to persons of the weakest memories, meanest capacities, or busiest employments, and matter of thankfulness to all, that the whole design and method of our salvation is many times comprised in one single sentence; and if there are any who do not profit by the instruction it affords them, the fault is in their wills, and in the grossness of their hearts; it is because they thrust the word of life from them, and *love darkness rather than light*. Let us endeavour to open the text in this view; for the words are weighty, carry life or death in them, and demand our most serious attention: *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

What is death? We know it is the separation of soul and body. But are they never to meet again? Is it only the utter extinction of our beings, or the loss of life, motion, and sense for ever? No; *St Paul* has here prevented any such mistake; he tells us, that death has a sting in it, or something that makes it dreadful to think of.

I. We

I. We must consider what it is; it is sin.

But what then is sin; and from whence does it derive its power, not only to kill the body, but to torment the soul after death, and give both soul and body up to eternal punishment in hell?

II. We must take notice of what is here farther told us, *that the strength of sin is the law.*

And when once we are made duly sensible of our misery and helplessness, knowing that we all have that sin in us which is the sting of death, and stand condemned by the righteous sentence of the law, we shall see the great blessing and benefit of a Redeemer, cast a longing eye towards *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*; and,

III. Understand what reason we have to say with the Apostle, *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

I. We are here told, that *the sting of death is sin*. Sin is the cause of death, and of all the calamities, pains, and sicknesses which  
lead



lead to it. Sin brought death upon *Adam*, and all his posterity. For it is not, as some fancy, in contradiction to the Bible, that there must be somewhere such a world of imperfection and suffering as this, in their imaginary scale of being ; but mankind have broken the law of their creation, and brought evil upon themselves by a voluntary defection from the will of their Maker. Death was not the original design and appointment of God. He did not make death, nor us for it ; and we may venture to affirm, that if there never had been sin in the world, there neither would have been death, nor suffering of any kind. A breathless corps never would have been seen, a diseased body, bowed down to the earth, and broken with its infirmities, never would have been known ; and when we follow husband or wife, child or dear relation to the grave, when we feel the approach of our own dissolution, and know that one hour more will close our eyes in the darkness of death, we know too the reason of all this misery and sorrow in the world of a good God, it is sin. But then this is not all ; we must carry our thoughts still farther.

ther. For though sin puts a sting in the hand of death to kill our bodies, and lay them in the dust, yet its desperate malignity does not stop there. The venom of it reaches to the soul, and is death to our better and immortal part ; not by destroying it, but by separating it from God, who is its true life, preparing it for, and consigning it to the horrors of the second death. And this is indeed the sharpness of death's sting, what makes it painful and terrible to think of ; and what we may suppose the Apostle principally intends, when he says, *the sting of death is sin*. Not meaning that all do in fact dread death alike on this account ; for many make a mock at sin ; many have but faint and weak apprehensions at the best of the great evil of it, and they are but few in comparison who are awakened to a sense of their guilt and danger. But what you are to observe and understand from the words is, that St Paul informs us by direction from the Spirit of God that it is so, whether men think of it or not ; and that therefore you must come full into this belief, whatever the reason of your minds may suggest to the contrary,

contrary, not only that sin brought death into the world, but that it will follow us out of it, and its curse be chiefly felt in another. For otherwise, death might more easily be submitted to; and if we did not fear it on account of its consequences, and the unknown state it gives us up to, it would in the main be a harmless thing, rather a falling asleep, than the sore evil we now think it; and desirable to many as their release from the pains and sorrows of a wearisome life. But alas! it conveys them to much greater, if they are not prevented; and when the Scripture says, *the soul that sinneth shall die*; it cannot be understood that sinners shall die only to this world, for that we know is unavoidable let us live as we please; but die eternally.

Will you think of this? Will you see what a curse there is in that sin which sleeps so quietly in your bosoms, and gives so little disturbance to your consciences? Do you not hear it in every passing-bell? Do you never bestow a serious reflection on the mischiefs of it continually spread before your eyes, in disappointments and losses, in bodily

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accidents,

accidents, pains, and sicknesses, in war, plague, famine, earthquakes, and other grievous judgments, in the death of thousands every day, and the certainty of your own? And would you know what sin is, why it is so deadly, and has such power to ruin us, to destroy the peace of our lives, to drown the world as it once did with a flood, to set it on fire as it will at the end of time, to reduce the bodies of all that ever lived in it to dust, to rise with us out of our graves, and be our everlasting plague, if we die with the guilt of it upon us? Are you set down in this belief, and does the affirmation of an Apostle, that *the sting of death is sin*, gain your full assent?

II. Then hear and understand that *the strength of sin is the law*.

The law, or will of God, however made known to us; whether as written in our hearts, and discovered by the light of natural reason, or revealed to us in scripture; that law which we confess ourselves bound to, and ask mercy for having broken, if we know what we mean when we say at the end  
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of every one of the commandments, “ Lord, “ have mercy on us, and incline our hearts to “ keep this law.” And it is the strength of sin, or gives it power to destroy us, by discovering and defining it, forewarning us of the danger of it, and in case of transgression accusing us in the name of God, and condemning without mercy: not only for the outward gross acts of sin, downright murder, adultery, false swearing, &c; but by tracing all sin up to the heart, and finding us guilty there to God, though perhaps we may be able to justify ourselves before men.

If we clear ourselves of all guilt upon this ground, and stand upon our innocence, because we have a tolerably fair appearance in the eye of the world, and men like ourselves can lay nothing to our charge, we shall be fatally deceived. For you must be well aware that the law has an inward, spiritual meaning, and must be understood in its whole extent, as Christ has taught us to explain it, *Matt. v.* Infomuch that malice, hatred, scornful anger, is murder; the lustful eye is adultery; not putting our whole trust in God, not bearing an inward, profound re-

verence to his holy name in our hearts, are breaches of the second and third commandments, in the intention of the law, and in the sight of God; and so of all the rest.

This, I say, is a point which we should thoroughly understand, and be well grounded in, lest we mistake our condition altogether; as we certainly shall, if we mistake the rule by which it is to be tried. There are many persons who from natural goodness of temper, civility of manners, worldly prudence, and what is called decent pride, or sense of reputation, can acquit themselves in the main of scandalous, open sin, at the same time that perhaps they are guilty of the breach of every one of the commandments; because they do not go to the full extent of them, do not keep them as unto God, but only to men, and never consider them as reaching the heart and all its motions. And from hence it comes to pass that so little account is generally made of the remedy of God's providing for sin, of the necessity of humbling ourselves before him in repentance, and suing out our pardon in the name of Christ; which is utterly impossible till we see ourselves in  
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the light of condemned malefactors, by bringing both heart and life to the touchstone of the law, as considered in its full, spiritual meaning, and acknowledging the justice of its sentence.

But perhaps you will think this is hard measure, considering the corruption and weakness of mankind, and be ready to require a reason why the law of God should be not only so exceeding broad, but inexorably strict and severe. The answer to which is, *Who art thou that repliest against God?* Surely, his authority is reason sufficient in the case to all who own it, and believe his word; and you cannot but be sensible of the extreme danger of resisting, or questioning it. Try what you can do against him in other respects; whether you can command rain, and fruitful seasons; whether you can preserve yourselves in health, and free from all accidents; whether you can stop the raging of a fever, or keep the breath in your bodies when God commands it out of them: I say, try this first, see if you can controul his will in any one instance; before you venture a whole eternity upon your opposition to it.

Never be so foolish as to say, This sin is little, or that command is hard ; but remember, and lay it to heart, that the will of God is the law to which all his creatures are bound, and must of all necessity take place, whether we see the fitness of it or not, or however we may presume to dispute it. But nevertheless let reason be judge. God says, Do this, and live ; Transgress, and die : the Apostle says, *this law is the strength of sin*, and gives it power to condemn, ruin and destroy us. Because if God gives a law to mankind, it must not only be with design to be obeyed, but to execute the penalty annexed to it in case of transgression. For otherwise it could have no force and virtue as a law, but would in effect destroy itself. And if you suppose that the case is different where the law is in God's hands, and that you may presume upon a mitigation of the severity of it on that account, you argue just the wrong way, and make that a plea for disobedience, which should in all reason deter you from it. For his truth and justice are infinite as himself, and the danger of opposing his authority so much the greater because he *is* God, because  
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he cannot lie nor repent, and has power to *destroy both soul and body in hell*. So Christ teaches us to reason in the point. *Matt. x. 28*. And if you will still be pleading against the will of your Maker, and the necessity of an absolute submission to it on pain of his utmost displeasure ; if you will take the liberty to *call evil good, and good evil*, just as you please ; or allow yourselves in the practise of any one known sin, upon a presumption that he will not put his threatnings in execution, consider well, I beseech you, what you are doing. For what is this but prescribing a rule to God, taking the law into your own hands, and setting yourselves above him ? What would become of his authority in the world, what reverence would be paid to it, what reason could there be for his calling men to repentance, if we were allowed to entertain a secret belief that his law might be broken with impunity in any one instance ? What bounds, do you think, would men set to themselves, or where would they stop in sinning, if they could once have any the least ground to persuade themselves that

there is no danger in transgressing the bounds which God has set them?

But besides what has been said, it may be farther considered, that as the happiness of all intelligent creatures arises from, and is founded in their union with the will of God, and can possibly be founded in nothing else; so it is necessary that his will should be made known to them, by a law of his giving, as the means or instrument of that union. And it is likewise evident, that when such a law is given, the certain consequence of breaking it must be misery and ruin to the creature; unless it is supposed that there can be any such thing in nature as happiness contrary to God's idea of it, and in opposition to his will. What the law in heaven is to the blessed Angels, you will not expect that I should tell you; but that they have one may reasonably be concluded from the fall of some of them, occasioned by their rebellion against God, and defection from his will, in some manner declared to them under the form of law. It was not therefore the effect of arbitrary will in God, nor intended merely for a trial of *Adam's*

*Adam's* obedience, that he had a law delivered him to keep as soon as he was brought into being; but because he could not be happy so much as for one moment without a free choice of the only sovereign and blessed will, and full subjection to it. A law then he must have, or be left to make a happiness for himself in some way of his own contriving independently of God, which we may venture to affirm again is impossible.

And what I am now observing will help us to account for some difficulties in the history of the Fall, as delivered by *Moses*. If it should be asked, Why did God give the first man a law, foreseeing the breach of it, and the misery that would follow? The reason now appears to be, that there was an absolute necessity for it, and that God could provide no other happiness for him but that of his own will. If it should be asked, Why that law, seemingly so frivolous, was not to eat of a certain tree? The answer is, that it was as much a test of his subjection, and dependence on God, whose prerogative to know good and evil, or be the fountain of light

light and knowlege to his creatures, was sufficiently intimated to him in the name of the tree, as any other would have been that we know of ; and likewise that it could not be a prohibition of any of those crimes which now abound in the world, Murder, Adultery, Theft, Evil-speaking, Covetousness, &c. because in Paradise he had no temptation to them. If it should be asked again, Why death, especially death spiritual, which we now have chiefly in view, was the penalty of transgression ? It may be replied, That the very act, and every act of transgression, necessarily and in its own nature, by breaking off the will from God, *is* death to the soul, as much as a sword in the heart is the death of the body ; and that therefore *Adam* lost his true life, and could not but die as to God and happiness, in the very day of his sin. I say, it appears from hence that neither angels nor men can be without a law, as it is the only method in which the will of God can be declared to them, and conformity to his will is the sole means of their happiness. We may presume that otherwise

wife God would not have entrusted us with the dangerous liberty of chusing life or death, and put it in our power to be miserable; but we now see that life and death are necessarily linked together; and that the very possibility of happiness arises out of that liberty. And from hence too we may observe, with much self-abasement, and melancholy reflection on the corruption of our present state, that there can be no such thing as unmixed happiness in a world of sinful creatures. Well would it be for us, if we would qualify ourselves for the little of it that is to be had upon earth, by coming as near to the will of God as we can; and spend all our days in a continual preparation, and patient waiting for that blessed time when there will be no more pain nor suffering, because our natures will then be perfectly purged from all evil. Upon the whole, the account of the sin and fall of man is a very instructive, and awakening point of revelation. *St Paul* had it strongly impressed upon his mind in the whole chapter preceeding the text; and with a lively, piercing sense of the fatal consequence

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sequence of disobeying the will of God in that instance, affirms concerning every other, that *the sting of death is sin*, and that *the strength of sin is the law*, as being given us of God to be kept on pain of death in the full extent of the word, death *temporal* and *eternal*.

Be not therefore deceived. Sin is not the harmless thing you think it: It is death. Adultery is death, stealing is death, drunkenness is death, evil-speaking is death. The breach of all, and every one of the commandments, spiritually understood, and as reaching the heart, is certain death. The law gives sin power to kill, and cannot be broken. It is the law of heaven, and the justice of heaven ratifies its sentence. *Adam* found it so; *Christ* found it so; every awakened soul finds it so, bears witness to the righteous judgment of the law, trembles for its guilt, and has the sentence of death in itself. On this dreadful point of time we all stand before God, whether you will believe it or not, condemned by his law as sinners, and ready for the stroke of justice: and  
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what can save us from it, who shall work our deliverance? I must not withhold your comfort from you. I must tell you from the word of truth what it is that must support our spirits, and bear us up against the fear of condemnation. You think the law is strict, do not love to hear of death for sin, and call it hard preaching. Why, in the nature and reason of the thing it must be strict. It cannot bend to the will of man. We are not at liberty to choose whether we will obey it, or not. If it denounces death for sin, death it must have. But at the same time that we declare this to you, it is to prepare you for your remedy; and if you will hear me, I have now glad tidings to declare to you, in the name of the Lord, and in the words of his Apostle.

*III. Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Lord, help here; grant us a right understanding of this point, that our souls may bless thee for the mercy of our redemption, and rejoice in thy salvation.

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Do you hear? there is a victory obtained, but not by us. It is just as the words sound. The victory is not ours, but Christ's; gained by him for us, and given to us, and the glory of it is all his own. Our good hearts, and good meanings, our best repentance, best works, best prayers, best sincerity, have nothing to do here. They neither had, nor can have any share in the victory here spoken of; and we are in danger of losing the benefit of it, if we make them our trust, or put them in the place of Christ. The Apostle's exhortation to be immovably steadfast, and *always abounding in the work of the Lord*, will have its due weight with all believers, and shall be offered to your consideration in its place and order. But however we abound in it, or whatever we do for ourselves, it is not the victory we want; and you must carefully observe that the strength of the Apostle's inference for steadfastness in the work we have to do under Christ, lies in this, *viz.* that we proceed in it upon sure grounds, as knowing first, from what Christ has done for us, that *our labour will not be in vain in the Lord*. For  
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in vain it must have been, if he by taking our nature upon him had not redeemed it from the curse of the fall, and carried it triumphantly through all the stages of its recovery, performed a spotless obedience in it, suffered death upon the cross for the sin of it, raised it from the grave, ascended into heaven, and sat down with it at the right hand of God. What are we thinking of, and how shameful is our ignorance of all scripture, of God, of the accursed nature of sin, of the necessity of Christ's atonement for it, and the great difficulty of the work which the Father gave him to do, when we take it out of his hands, or proudly challenge any share of it to ourselves? He could say, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.* He said, what neither men nor angels could, *It is finished.* And blessed be God that he did say it; for it would daunt the stoutest heart upon earth to think that there is no hope of salvation, nor means of reconciliation with God, but by doing what he did, and what must of all necessity be done. That satisfaction might be made to the justice of God, the  
penalty

penalty of sin was to be suffered; if we had endured it in our own persons, it must have been for ever in hell. The law, that it might no longer be the strength of sin, and give it power to destroy us, was to be vindicated, and made honourable in the sight of men and angels, by being fulfilled in every jot and tittle of it. *Adam's* curse was to be revoked; the devil's head was to be bruised, and his power destroyed; death was to be conquered, heaven was to be opened, and all believers to sit down in it, clothed with a perfect righteousness. Whose work, whose might, whose glory was all this? Could you do these things, or any one of them? Why, we are condemned men and women, born under a sentence of death for the sin of our first Parents, and have made it our desert ten thousand times over by our own personal transgressions of the holy law of God. Can we, I say, whose souls are forfeited to the law, stop the course of justice, buy our pardon, and procure a right to eternal glory by any repentings, humblings, or good deeds of our own? We, who are both cor-  
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rupt and disabled, always weak and always sinners, and if we were not already under a sentence of condemnation, sure to deserve it every day of our lives ; can we justify ourselves to God, and challenge heaven in our own right ? Never call yourselves believers in Christ, till you know better what he has done for you, and how much it cost to redeem your souls. Never talk of your own doings, your own power or holiness, when sin is to be atoned, when the law is to have its due of a perfect obedience from you, when justice is to be made your friend, when Satan is to give up his right in you, when the grave is to be opened, when every dust of your bodies is to be brought together again and kindled into life, and soul and body to be presented holy to God, and fit to enter into heaven. Never think that all, or any part of this is to be done by man, for we could as soon make a world. Neither deceive yourselves with fancying, as too many do, that what Christ has chiefly done for us, was to make salvation-work more easy than it was before, and that therefore the perfor-

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mance of it will be looked for at our hands. I beseech you understand. He has made salvation both possible and easy to sinners, by doing and suffering in our stead what we could not; and our salvation now depends on the condition of believing that we could not do it, and that he did. You must not stand before God in a lie, you must not pretend that you are clean from all spot of sin in yourselves, you must not entertain a thought of being your own saviours; but if you would have peace with God, if you would be comforted, if you would be in a way of doing what *is* required of you, turn to a better hope, and say with an humble, steadfast faith, and great rejoicing in the conscience, *Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Consider the chapter of which these words are the conclusion, and see on what ground the belief of a resurrection to eternal life is established, and by whose victory it is that we attain to this hope.

So early as the Apostles days some called in question the resurrection of the dead.

But

But St Paul says, in answer to this, *If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen*, ver. 13. How is that? Why could not he have risen, whether any others do or not? And how does it follow that because he rose again, there must necessarily be a resurrection of the dead? Why, because he did not rise for himself, but for believers; their resurrection being included in his, and that they, as parts or members of his body, might be made partakers of his victory over death, be *quickened together with him, raised together, and with him sit together in heavenly places*, as the scripture expressly assures us they do, *Eph. ii. 5, 6*. So that his resurrection was the resurrection of all who belong to him; and as sure as they died in Adam, so surely in Christ, their second Father, shall they all be made alive; his rising as the first-fruits being a certain proof and pledge of a general harvest to follow in its time and order.

Now can it be made a question whether this great salvation is of grace, or of debt, of Christ, or of man? Whether it was the

work and contrivance of the blessed Trinity in mercy to lost mankind, or possible to be effected by any power, will, or righteousness of our own? *Who is this*, saith the Prophet, *that cometh travelling in the greatness of his strength?* Isai. lxiii. 1. Will you answer and say, It is I, I myself, *mighty to save?* O! lie down in the dust. Know your guilt. Confess your desert. Abhor yourselves. Let him who can, let *grace* save you. Understand what it is that distinguisheth the religion of the Gospel from all others, and is the chief ground of our rejoicing before God. It is the Lord Jesus Christ *our hope*, 1 Tim. i. 1. *who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. It is not that thereby we attain to such a righteousness of our own as will satisfy the law, and take out the sting of death; but because we have heard Christ himself saying, *This is the work of God*,—what he requires at our hands, and without which nothing that we do will be accepted,—*that ye believe in him whom he hath sent*; John vi. 29. sent from the bowels of his mercy to do what

no other could, to redeem us from the curse of the law, to ransom us from the grave, to exalt us to a place at God's right hand, by bearing our sins in his own body on the cross, offering up a spotless righteousness to God on our behalf, and communicating the merit of all he did and suffered to those who with an humble faith, and a deep sense of their unworthiness, lay their sins on his head, and fly to him as their only refuge from condemnation. Look for comfort and sure footing where you will, you will never find it but in this great article of our religion, that Christ is given to us of God to save us from the curse and ruin of our sin, and be our Father for life, as *Adam* was for death. Whatever we do is so defective, that we can place no confidence in it; and we shall always be in a state of the most distressing uncertainty, till we can say boldly in the faith of the great salvation which has been wrought for us, *Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath be-*

*gotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*  
1 Pet. i. 3, 4. I say, let us stand fast upon this ground, and receive mercy as mercy.

If God has manifested the riches of his nature in behalf of a lost world, and will be known of us as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, receiving us to a covenant of life and peace in him, let us not entertain a doubt of his gracious intention, so fully declared, so strongly recommended to our belief, so strangely confirmed and sealed to us, not only by his word, but oath, and the blood of his Son. Let us never forget it, let us not fly to other expedients, nor build our hopes of acceptance to the reward of eternal life on any other foundation than that of his grace and purpose in Christ Jesus, when it is so exactly suited to our case, and the very thing we want. Let us not defeat it, nor lose our interest in it, by robbing him of his glory, as we do by a proud conceit of ourselves. If there is any thing more  
astonishing



astonishing than the goodness of God in the redemption of sinners, it is the presumption of man in taking any share of it to himself.

What farther remains to be said, and must of all necessity be pressed upon you, and brought home to your consciences, is the Use and Improvement we are to make of Christ's victory, by taking him for our Lord and King to reign over us, unfeigned submission to his teaching, and living up to our faith.

Suppose now a Person awakened to a sense of his condition, and convinced of the exceeding sinfulness, great danger, and plague of sin; that he sees nothing but ruin and misery before him, and that if the wages of sin at all times is death, he must perish for ever, without help or hope in himself; that in this extremity he hears Christ preached as sent of God to work his deliverance, to make full satisfaction to justice, to bear the punishment of his sin, to fulfil the law in his stead, to die for him, to rise from the dead for him, to ascend into heaven, and take

possession of it for him; and that whenever he turns to God in repentance, and with an humble faith accepts the Lord Jesus Christ for his Saviour, he shall be entitled to all the benefits of his victory over sin, death, and hell: I say, suppose a person so awakened, so convinced, so believing, seeing such a curse in sin, such a glory in Christ, such riches of grace in God, and what, do you think, would be the ruling desire, and settled temper of his heart? Would it be to flight, and run the hazard of losing, or to keep the mercy he has gotten? Would it be to continue in rebellion against God, or study to make him some suitable returns of gratitude? Would it be to turn back to his former state, at the same time that he sees the guilt, the danger, the damnation of it, and is rejoicing in the mercy of deliverance from it? Behold here therefore the natural effect, and proper working of faith in the pardoning love of God through Christ Jesus, its happy influence on practice, what advantage it gives us for the reformation of our lives, and how sweetly it engages the believing

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ing soul to obedience, from a gracious principle of love.

It was a moving word which God spake concerning Israel, *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee up, Israel? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy; for I am God, and not man,* Hos. xi. 8, 9. This, I say, was a loud call to an hardened people to repent, and intended, as every display of the divine compassion is, to melt down their stubborn natures. But how much more gloriously was the love of God manifested, in giving his Son to die for a sinful, rebellious world! And what can kindle our love, and bind us in a sacred bond of grateful, willing subjection to him, if this does not? What can convince us more effectually of the heinous, accursed nature of sin, of God's vengeance against it, and will to punish it, what can give us a greater abhorrence of it, than the very method of our deliverance from it, by the death and sacrifice of Christ? If we could not make our  
peace

peace with God, if nothing but the blood of Christ could wash out the foul stains of our sin, how great is the pollution of it, how great was our danger, and how certain will be our doom if we continue in it?

May the ever blessed Spirit, who only can, enable you to consider and apply these Gospel arguments for your return to God in love and obedience. May he make the Lord Jesus precious to us in his whole salvation, and get the victory in us, as Christ has gotten it for us; that *in all things we may be conquerors through him that loved us*, and prove the truth and excellence of our religion by the purity of our lives. O soul, if God forgiveth all thy sin, let him heal all thy infirmities. If the bowels of God were moved for thee, if the blood of God was shed for thy redemption, if thou art saved beyond thy deserts, and far beyond all thy hopes, be faithful to his word and truth, be faithful to thyself, now hear the Apostle's inference from the doctrine of Christ's victory, and let it come to thee in the name of God.—*Be stedfast,*

*fast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* It is the call of his love to thy heart, and strictly bound upon thee by his command; it is the way in which all his people walk with him, it is the proof of thy discipleship; thy reward will be according to thy progress in holiness, and the want of it will give thee up to condemnation, and be the sting of death in thee for ever. The Scripture is so full and plain for a lively, faithful obedience, that whatever disputes there are concerning the ground of our salvation, whether it is by faith, or works, or partly one, and partly the other, there can be none about the necessity of our returning to God in repentance, and cleaving to him in sincerity for the purification of our hearts. Grace hath abounded to us, and great mercy hath been shewed us from the Lord; but, let us pretend what we will, is never believed, and cannot possibly be received by us, till we are persuaded that the recovery of our hearts and wills to God in holiness, is a necessary and very precious part of it. You must not think that you are  
Christians,

Christians, because you have been baptized, and are called by that name ; no, not though you come to Church and Sacraments ; you may do this for credit's sake, and more from form, or custom, than the preparation of the heart, and real desire of spiritual blessings ; but if you would be owned by Christ as his disciples and friends, the knowlege of a sinful, condemned state must bring you to him for salvation from it, with a will to forsake all sin, and live by his rule, as God shall enable you. These are the two great parts of his religion, faith in him as the Saviour, making our peace with God, in opposition to the conceit of any work, merit, or righteousness of our own, and faithful, pure obedience springing from it. *What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* For whoever does, it is at the peril of his soul, and all his hopes. Faith saves all that are saved, but cannot save the lawless and disobedient, because they have none. It is the nature and essence of a true faith to work by love, and keep the commandments ; that is, with sincerity of endeavour, all of them  
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in heart, will, and purpose, though none perfectly ; and the more it improves in obedience, the quicker it is to spy defects, and always ready to mourn over them. If our faith cannot stand this test, it can stand none. *If the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, does not teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world ;* Tit. ii. 11, 12. if we are not convinced of the necessity of striving against all sin, and endeavouring to perfect holiness in the fear of God, we may be as sure our faith is false as that the Gospel is true.

Let us then first see the exceeding great evil of sin, and the death to which it subjects us, in the glass of Christ's sufferings, that we may be thankful to God for sending him into the world to save us from it, and shew our gratitude to him in the way he requires of us, by returning to our duty, and praying with the heart that his will may be done in earth as it is in heaven. Let us make Christ the strength of our salvation, and he will be our strength for obedience. Let *the law,*

*law*, doing its office in condemning us, be *our Schoolmaster to bring us to Christ* for deliverance from it as a covenant, and he will bring us back again to the law, with hearty liking to it as a rule, and with all possible advantage for performance. Know your misery, know your helplessness, think how God loved you, and what Christ has done for you; get your hearts warmed with a sense of redeeming mercy, and it will be the fire of love in them, constrain you to live to him, and make your obedience a free-will offering to God for Christ's sake. What he said of the woman, who anointed his feet, and washed them with her tears, *she loved much, because much was forgiven her*, will be true of every soul which has felt the sting of sin, believes it to be death, comes to Christ for life, and thanks God for his victory. By the help of the same Spirit which convinced it of sin, it will be humble, it will be fearful of offending, it will hold fast its hope, it will go on from strength to strength in the way of holiness, and by the peace of God which rules in it be kept in all good, from all evil.

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The Lord grant that we may so *build up ourselves on our most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost, keeping ourselves in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*, Jude xx.21. To whom with the Father, and the holy Ghost, one blessed God in Trinity, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. *Amen.*

## F I N I S.

## E R R A T A.

## P R E F A C E,

- Page 13. Line 13. a Comma after *received*,  
 21. 7. a Comma after *operating it*,

## P A R A P H R A S E,

- Page 35. Line 6. a Comma after *Christ*,  
 52. 4. a full Stop after *worshippers*.  
 75. 14. a Mark of Interrogation after *attained to?*  
 97. 17. dele Comma after *gift is*  
 109. 6. only a Comma after *death of Christ*,  
 180. ult. for *nation*, read *notion*

The running Title of the Sermon at the Top of each Page is a Mistake, and judged by the Author (who was at a Distance from the Press) to be improper.